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**FITTING IN AND GETTING ON:  
A STUDY OF THE ORGANISATIONAL  
SOCIALISATION OF SENIOR MANAGERS JOINING  
AN ORGANISATION**

**BY  
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**A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of  
Philosophy**

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## ABSTRACT

The relationship between organisational behaviour research and commercial companies is complex, primarily because academic researchers and companies expect different outcomes from participation in the research. Businesses are usually looking to improve organisational performance and seek immediate, practical and applicable outcomes. Academic researchers seek an extension of theoretical knowledge and a contribution to the advancement of their field.

Thus a researcher in with a foot in both camps is seesawing between organisational behaviour and managerial practice. The task is to manage the tension to satisfy both parties. This study is an example of a piece of research aiming to satisfy the academic criteria for a PhD thesis and the commercial criteria of the sponsoring organisation, in this case British Airways (BA).

BA had noted a number of business costs associated with senior managers who joined the organisation from outside. The aim was to find a way of reducing the costs and improving the joining experience for these individuals in a way which got them to high performance quickly.

The theoretical field of organisational socialisation, described as having no unifying and coherent 'theory' of socialisation (Saks and Ashforth 1997:235), provided a substantially appropriate conceptual lens through which the current research could be analysed and subsequently applied in a commercial setting.

In summary the two aims of this study were, first, to extend theoretical knowledge of organisational socialisation, specifically by confirming or disconfirming the relationship between investiture and performance found by Ashforth and Saks (1996) to a standard

which met PhD award criteria. Second, to find a way reduce the cost and improve the experience of senior managers joining BA in a way which met this and other organisations' needs to improve performance.

The research study provided evidence that the relationship between investiture and performance was strong, thus supporting the results of the previous study. In extending the research this study also found the relationship to be complex, contingent on a range of factors, and continuous. From these findings it was possible to generate a single definition of OS and a model which coherently integrates each of the previous theoretical model resulting in a 'connected' theory of OS. This re-conceptualisation of OS has the potential to profoundly affect the direction of future research and theoretical thinking in the OS field.

Additionally from the findings it was possible to design some practical and applicable tools predicted to meet the needs of both BA and other commercial organisations.



## **PREFACE**

The research which follows focused on exploring some specific questions deriving from both my personal experience and observation and my professional interest in the way senior managers joining a new organisation fit in and get on. Writing up the results of the exploration of these questions is particularly timely as I have just left BA after four years and joined another organisation (Marks and Spencer).

I hope that what I have learned in doing the research will stand me in good stead and enable me to apply the suggestions and recommendations I have made as a result of my study.

If one outcome of my work is that senior staff joining organisations (myself included) can embrace and enjoy what is often a stressful experience. If they can fit in and get on happily and effectively without compromising the qualities for which they have often been brought in. If they can successfully deliver high-quality work performance with the co-operation and participation of the myriad organisational players who are new to them - then I feel my research will have been a worthwhile investment. It will have redressed some of the business and the personal costs around senior level joiners who fail to fit in and get on within organisations.

## **ABBREVIATIONS AND CONVENTIONS USED**

BA	British Airways
HR	Human resources
OS	Organisational socialisation
SLJ	Senior level joiner
SM	Senior manager
GM	General manager

For ease of reading the word 'he' or 'his' has been used throughout the text to refer to an individual. This convention is not intended to be gender-biased.

Where informant group members are quoted it is by a name they have been assigned to protect their anonymity. It is not their real name. Where managers of the senior level joiners or movers are quoted they are referred to as 'x's boss'.

## CHAPTER ONE: BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH

Beginning a new job is always exciting and sometimes intimidating (Morin and Cabrera 1991). Those joining an organisation at a senior level are subject to particular strains. There is an expectation that these 'organisational veterans' (Reichers, Wanous and Steele 1994:21) will 'hit the ground running' and be able to deliver a high level performance very rapidly, the popular view being that they have around 100 days to prove themselves (Sanders and Sidney 1998).

This research explores senior level joiners' (SLJs') experiences of fitting in and getting on in organisations. 'Fitting in' is defined as being socially accepted and supported following joining the organisation and 'getting on' is defined as doing the job effectively, that is, in a way that meets or exceeds organisational expectations. This research explicitly addresses both experiences and suggests reasons for greater or lesser degrees of each. 'Senior level' is defined as managerial staff in roles that report either to an executive director or to the deputy of an executive director. Within BA, where this research took place this was a population of 560. The roles recruited for included both general managerial and specialist technical. (Appendix 7 provides the organisation chart for BA's management team).

The definitions 'fitting in' and 'getting on', arose as a result of conversations with new SLJs and their managers as they struggled to find appropriate labels and shorthand for the myriad joining experiences they were trying to make sense of. Reflecting on the conversations, it appeared that labelling aspects of joining related to socialisation as 'fitting in', and aspects of joining relating to performance as 'getting on' gave 'a sharable linguistic formulation to already shared feelings, arising out of shared circumstances' (Weick 1995:9).

What follows in this first chapter is a personal sketch of some SLJ experiences in BA where, during the entire period of the research, I was an employee. The topic of enabling SLJs to fit in and get on was a 'hot issue' for me in my day-to-day work as this research was initiated. But, as clarified in the research process (Chapter Six of this thesis), great efforts were made to ensure that this research remained as objective as possible, uninfluenced by my organisational role.

This first chapter is intended to set the context so that the reader has some direction and background for the more substantive piece. I have written this background chapter in the first person. Subsequent chapters I have written in the third person. This chapter covers:

- The starting point for the research: my own experience and observation
- The costs to BA of an SLJ failing to fit in and get on
- BA's suggestions about what factors might be instrumental in causing some SLJs to fail
- BA's exploration of what factors might help others succeed
- Why BA decided to initiate more detailed research work on SLJs

## **My experience and observation**

This research arose as a result of my personal experience and observation from two perspectives. First, as an SLJ going into three large organisations (Price Waterhouse, Xerox, and British Airways); and second as a member of the Human Resource (HR) function in each organisation: part of my role being to recruit and induct SLJs into the organisation.

As an SLJ myself I noted four key aspects of joining that were common to the three organisations that employed me:



1. The organisational induction, where it existed and I experienced it, typically focused on explicit general organisational information that was relatively easy to pass on (organisation charts, statements of values and explanations of particular processes). It failed to highlight issues around my role the way of operating in it and the style to use for getting quick results.
2. This organisational information was presented to me in the first few days or weeks of joining. The difficulty I found with this (and subsequently found that others had too) was that I had very little known context in which to place it, and yet I was expected to make a very quick contribution to organisational effectiveness. It seemed to me that information and knowledge had to be acquired within a certain time frame and that it was important to know how to get this on a 'just in time' basis in order to avoid information over or under load.
3. At the senior level it is the tacit and less explicable 'way we do things around here' knowledge that I felt was a more important contributor to my success than getting explicit information. I found that I could not get this tacit knowledge on my own. I needed the active participation and support of a range of others in helping point me in the right direction, explain things to me, support me in fitting in and explain the expectations for getting on. In one organisation it was very evident to me that some key stakeholders were actively withholding this support, while in another they were actively providing support. In my experience the attributes of the stakeholders were a key part of my success (and failure) in the role.
4. This tacit knowledge which is known to insiders is very difficult for outsiders to access. I was not presented with it as part of any organisational induction process. I had to be able to use my skills and experience to navigate and network effectively in order to access the knowledge. I had to have the ability among other attributes to enquire, to make connections, to analyse and interpret a wide range of new information, to establish rapport, and to demonstrate professional credibility. The

attributes I brought to the new role were another factor instrumental in my fitting in and getting on.

In my organisational roles as a member of the HR function I made three observations.

First, if the SLJ fails to fit in and get on, the costs are high. Conversely, if the SLJ succeeds in fitting in and getting on, the return on the recruitment investment is high.

Second, in working to fit in and get on in an organisation the personal attributes of the joiner (the aspects focused on and explored in the selection and recruitment stages) was only one of at least four clusters of factors working towards a successful joining. The other three I both personally experienced (as explained above) and also observed in other SLJs: these being the role context, the attitudes of the stakeholders to the role and role holder and the time frame 'allowed' for making the appointment work.

Third, rigorous selection and recruitment processes - designed to weed out people who might not fit in or get on - appeared no consistent predictor of actual success or failure in the job. Ken Brotherston (1997:13), Managing Director, Korn/Ferry Selection made this point succinctly when he said, 'People are hired for their ability and fired for their personality.'

## **Business costs of senior level joiners (SLJs) who fail to fit in and get on**

In discussing my observations with peers and colleagues it was confirmed that SLJs who failed to make the grade incurred financial, personal and organisational costs. ('Failure' being defined here as an inability to fit in and get on well enough to qualify as a 'good performer' in the organisation within a usually undefined, but tacitly agreed time frame). Each of these costs is discussed below.

**Financial costs**

Although the numbers of SLJs BA recruits each year are relatively small (about three per month) the monetary cost of recruiting each is high. Table 1 illustrates the BA recruitment process. Each stage in the process involves indirect costs (associated with staff time and expertise) or direct costs (for example, advertising fees) or both (for example, the costs of purchasing and administering psychometric tests).

BA's Recruitment Department estimates that for each SLJ recruited the organisation spends about £50k in direct costs, but it does not calculate an indirect cost per SLJ. More junior grades of staff cost BA less to recruit but, again, precise costs are not calculated.

**TABLE 1: THE BA RECRUITMENT PROCESS**

Activity	By whom	Time scale (typically 12 weeks to get to activity 15)	When	Action
Decide application method				
Decide selection method				
Write advertisement				
Book interviewers, dates, rooms				
Prepare information for candidates				
Send out candidate information				
Screen applications				
Invite candidates to selection process				
Carry out selection process				
Take up references on successful candidate				
Make selection decision/establish contract of employment				
Make offer to successful candidate				
Send signed copy of offer letter to admin team				
Send letters to unsuccessful candidates				
Arrange induction and action joining admin				
New recruit starts <sup>1</sup>				

<sup>1</sup> At a senior manager level this can be up to six months after the offer has been accepted.



Additional (and uncalculated) costs are incurred where an existing vacancy or newly created job remains unfilled, or where the person recruited is unable to deliver a high enough performance to get an acceptably quick return on recruitment costs. The training and development of a new joiner who subsequently leaves or under-performs also involves additional costs, as does any re-recruitment if this becomes necessary.

### **Personal costs**

The consequences of SLJs failing to fit in and get on are costly to the individual, to his peers and subordinates and to the line manager who has recruited him. These costs can be described as personal in that they are largely to do with feelings and emotions, but they impact directly on business results.

Business related costs are incurred if, for example, an SLJ feels that he has made the wrong decision in joining the organisation, that he is incapable (with a consequent loss of self-esteem), or that the organisation is to blame for his failure to perform. These sorts of feelings and emotions can have an impact on the people around the SLJ if they manifest in failure to motivate or be motivated, to manage people effectively, or to deliver satisfactorily.

Personal costs to the SLJ are implied in such comments (gathered from the research) as:

As a new joiner you are put in the position of 'you fit in'. From personal experience I've learned there's a BA way and I don't know yet what it is. (Jim after 6 weeks)

It's not a caring, supportive organisation at this level. We're guilty of assuming that newcomers can hit the ground running. Sink or swim is part of their experience - they just get thrown into the job. (Bob's boss after six months)



It's absolutely unquestionable in BA that you have to bide your time to be accepted. You have to 'join the club'. (Zak after 6 months)

Costs to the SLJ's peers and subordinates are implied in such comments as:

New joiners need to encourage co-operation not demand it. They've got to get a partnership relationship working. (Ian's boss after 6 months)

He could work better with colleagues. He needs to spend more time working with people on the front line. (Ed's boss after 6 months)

Certain of my skills and abilities are valued, but people around are protective of their functional responsibility. BA is not making the most of my ability to add value. (Bev after 6 months)

Costs to the SLJ's recruiting line manager are implied in such comments as:

I probably didn't give him enough of my time to help him get to grips with the culture. I've learned a lot from bringing him in. I would do it differently next time. (Mike's boss after 6 months)

BA's approach to managing people is different from my previous organisation. BA is more people oriented and more concerned with feelings. My manager has given me a lot of help in getting to grips with this. (Babs after six months)

We may not directly try to change new joiner's values and beliefs but we do. BA doesn't learn from newcomers - it carries on in glacier-like fashion. (Kim's boss after 6 weeks)

All the comments above imply business costs, although these are neither identified nor quantified.

## Organisational costs

The costs of failure of an SLJ can be damaging to the organisation as a whole. For example, the consequence of the media reporting on an SLJ who leaves within a short period of time can damage the reputation of the organisation and lead to difficulties in re-recruiting. This is illustrated in The Economist reporting on 'The Secrets of Succession' (25 October 1997) where it is noted that:

AT and T, the former monopoly, has struggled simply to acquire a new boss. In July the board was forced to admit that it had made a mistake in choosing John Walter, a printing executive whom it had brought in nine months earlier as the apparent successor to its retiring CEO and chairman, Robert Allen.

Within the search and selection communities some organisations have a reputation for being difficult to recruit for as the following quote illustrates:

The non executives had asked headhunters to put up some candidates from other companies in the UK, but according to them, they did not discover an outstanding retailer who could work with the 'unique' M and S culture. (Bevan, 2001:199)

Outsiders may start to make assumptions and judgements on organisational health if they see the public failure of SLJs within the organisation. Alternatively outsiders can be beguiled by the 'gloss' of the organisation and expect more from it than it can offer in reality. This latter type of response is illustrated in such comments as:

British Airways has a fantastic marketing image. I joined with the expectation of real top-notch. It takes a few months to see that it's a huge layer of gloss overlaying a range of problems. (Ted after six months)

The gloss helps people avoid making difficult decisions. They're not seeing the huge threats and incredibly low levels of productivity that this industry has. (Liz after six weeks)

<p>The recruitment process told me that I was brought in to make needed changes. Then when I got here I was asked to stop making changes. (Lex after six months)</p>
--

## **What factors might cause SLJs to fail?**

In the year before the research was undertaken there were several high profile SLJs who left within six months of joining BA. A number of other SLJs left as quickly. These people were less high profile but almost as costly to the organisation to lose. The leaving rate of SLJs caused organisational concern, and some work was started to find out what was going on. Because (as described above) I had myself experienced and observed factors that seemed to me to contribute to success or failure in the role, I was asked to lead this piece of work.

My personal experience and observation was confirmed by anecdote, by other people's observations, by exit interviews and finally by colleague feedback, both on SLJs who left the organisation within six to nine months of joining and those who were perceived as under-performers.

The evidence available seemed to suggest that the joiners who failed to establish themselves within BA had particular problems getting to grips with the same four specific aspects of the taking on the role that I had noted as being key factors, these being:

1. The style and ways of operating to make performance in their role effective: what was acceptable and what was not.
2. The time pressure they felt under to prove they could perform to expectation.
3. The navigation aspects: where to go for things, which is largely influenced by the attributes and attitudes of those who have a 'stakeholding' in the role and in the SLJ's success. (The main stakeholders observed being the SLJ's manager, peer group, staff, and the organisation).



4. The tension between maintaining certain personal attributes and the pressure SLJs felt under to make personal changes in order to be effective in their role: how to behave to get things done.

Each of these four factors is explained in more detail below.

### **Style and ways of operating**

Recruitment processes can select for style of operating for example, by using certain psychometric tests, or by evidence based interview techniques. However, selection in this way is based in current or past situations. Using various techniques the aim is to predict style of operation in the role being selected for. However, recruitment and selection processes often fail to predict accurately, which means that SLJs can be shocked when, on joining the organisation, they find that they feel they have to adapt their own style of operating to that of the new organisation's. This (apparently necessary adaptation) is reflected in comments from BA's SLJs such as:

Here you need to explain what you're up to and get more buy-in from people you're asking to do things (than in my previous organisation). (Lynn after six weeks)

I've never been told that something I've been doing isn't the way it's done in BA. But I've had to change the way I do things. (Beth after six months)

The feedback I've had tells me that people are receptive to the things I'm doing but there are one or two who don't feel completely comfortable with my style. (Pete after six weeks)

For SLJs this can be an unnerving experience. It may have the effect of slowing down their ability to reach good performance quickly. It may even be experienced at such an intolerable level that they decide to leave.

## **Time pressure**

Generally SLJs felt they were failing themselves and the organisation if they were not able to contribute rapidly and effectively in their role. At this stage of the investigation it was noted that an SLJ who came into a specific technical role (for example an aviation lawyer) was able to contribute much more quickly than an SLJ who came into a general management type of role (for example a marketing purchasing manager). It was also noted that people who took up newly created jobs felt the time pressure of delivery to be slightly more than people replacing a previous incumbent in an existing role.

Nevertheless the need to achieve success quickly and visibly was felt by all types of role holder as the comments below illustrate:

In a senior role you need to be highly performing. You need to have delivered something quickly. (Nat after six weeks)

If you want to be known as someone energetic and hardworking demonstrate it. People have to make a difference within three months. Newness is not an excuse for lack of impact. (Alan after six months)

## **The role of stakeholders**

Knowing where to go for things is less about the processes, systems and mechanics of the organisation (the information that is explicit and available on the corporate intranet or in any induction process) and more about the tacit, unseen, and invisible (what Egan, 1994 calls the 'shadow side' of organisations). If they are to deliver results quickly SLJs need to be able to hook into the organisational navigation system rapidly. To do this it appears that they need to solicit the support and active participation of the various stakeholders in the role.

Generally speaking, SLJs find it a hard and slow process to learn the navigation skills of experienced organisational members. Often they are not helped in this by insiders, as is evident in the types of comments recorded below:

The organisation is blind to what it does to new people. It looks opaque to people on the receiving end. It's difficult to find the best way to navigate through. (Sam's boss after six weeks)

I'm guilty of assuming that everybody knows everything. New joiners get thrown into the job and have to sink or swim. It's quite daunting when someone looks at the huge organisation and needs to know, 'Who do I go to for this?' (Tom's boss after six months)

### **The pressure to make personal changes**

Although most SLJs had been through a rigorous senior manager selection process, some felt that on joining BA they were being asked to take another look at their personal value sets. From what was reported it seemed although this pressure was indirectly and subtly applied, it was nevertheless keenly felt, as the comments below suggest:

There's no corporate plan to change people's values and beliefs. Nobody tries to change us. They just ignore us if they don't like us. You get frozen out until you conform. (Sue after six months)

The machine says conform, but individuals don't set out to change individuals. We may not try to change the values and beliefs of newcomers, but there does seem to be an expectation that they will conform to the bureaucracy, the slowness, and the deference culture. (Eve's boss after six weeks)

BA needs to be clear about the impact and potential consequences of people holding different values and beliefs (as do new joiners). They can't just come in and dump them on BA. (Ned's boss after six weeks)



There was no doubt that what appeared to be an unstated request to conform put SLJs under a great deal of stress in their early days with the organisation. This was likely to have added to the stress already being experienced in starting work with a new organisation.

### **What factors might help SLJs succeed?**

The anecdote, observation, exit interviews and colleague feedback which made up the organisational efforts to discover the factors which contributed to an SLJ leaving BA exposed a gap in information about what factors might help SLJs succeed in BA. The experiences of SLJs who might be described as successful were not observed, investigated, or considered in the same way as the experiences of under-performers or leavers. Thus the organisation had no substantive or comparative clues on where it might learn from success in order to try to cut the costs of SLJs 'failing'.

In the absence of firm leads HR staff suggested a number of possibilities. These took as a starting point the four factors identified as potential contributors to failure. Each was reframed as a question with a possible answer and a possible reason for success.

However, the process revealed that there was not enough information to go on. We were shooting in the dark with only a few comments (underlined below) to guide us.

Given the scantiness of formal organisational intervention in the newcomer's early days with BA and the likelihood that no business case could (or would) be made to change the position, yet at the same time recognising the issues faced in bringing in senior level staff, we have raised some questions about taking an informal, more local, approach to senior staff entry to the organisation. (Axel's manager after six months)

I wasn't thrown in at the deep end - there was a handover with the previous incumbent who became my coach and mentor in the first few weeks in the job. (Tim after six months)

People have been fantastic in terms of enthusiastic welcome and friendliness and giving me their time to explain things and help me adjust. (Chris after six weeks)

My boss has been very supportive in helping me come into BA. He's given me hints and tips, pointed me in the right direction but left me get on with things in a supportive way.  
(Fred after six months)

## **Summary**

Although we had some information on why SLJs were failing, we realised that our scant information on why SLJs might be succeeding derived from a few comments on the positive effects of coaching and mentoring. (The SLJs making these comments had not left the organisation at the end of the research period and there was performance review information that they were doing well.) Having got to this stage we realised that we had to make a decision - either to let the SLJ 'thing' continue with no further HR intervention, or try to improve the SLJ experience to the benefit of all concerned. We decided to take the latter course.

## **Improving the SLJ experience**

It was of interest to note that, although the investigation described was lacking in depth and unfounded in theory, it did confirm and extend my personal and professional observations described at the start of this section. It seemed both to me and to a number of my colleagues in the Human Resource Department that we had identified an area ripe for improvement in terms of both cutting organisational cost, and developing the performance levels of SLJs, and possibly, by extension, job movers.

As a department we felt we had to rise to the implicit challenge put by one SLJ:

Nothing is well tailored to a senior manager coming in from the outside. (Ian after six weeks)



## **Laying the foundations**

A Human Resource Department workshop (in which I participated) was held. Its task was to assess the investigation outlined above and come up with ways of improving the experience of SLJs. It resulted in two polarised scenarios, each recognising the four factors identified. The first was a supportive, confirming scenario. Here the newcomer was warmly welcomed into the organisation and workgroup. He was included in what was going on, was helped by colleagues to adjust to the new role, was clearly valued both personally and for the skills he brought and felt he could contribute in a realistic time frame.

The other was an unsupportive, disconfirming scenario. Here the newcomer felt isolated, held at a distance by colleagues, shunned in seeking for help. He did not know whether what he brought was of value to BA, was not quite sure what he was supposed to be doing in the job and felt under pressure to deliver to very short time scales.

Along with these scenarios came the proposition that those who experienced more of the first scenario would fit in and get on much better than those who experienced more of the second. Integral to this proposition was the expectation that, if we were able to operationalise the first scenario, the financial, personal and organisational costs of SLJ failure would be cut.

In order to operationalise the first scenario we realised that we needed answers to four questions, related to the four factors discussed earlier. These questions were, how do SLJs get to grips with learning the way to fit in and get on? Why are some people quicker at fitting in and getting on than other people are? Who is key in helping them fit in and get on? How do SLJs help themselves fit in and get on?

Further discussion in the workshop brought about the notion that to understand how to make the experience of fitting in and getting on successful for SLJs we would have to do some thorough research based in recognised theory. We felt that only by getting this understanding would we be able to act to make things work better and at less cost. Given my background, interests and the stage I had got to in planning my doctoral study, people looked in my direction.

It was on this, perhaps unscientific but nevertheless organisationally real, basis that the research for this thesis became part of my portfolio of work.

## **Summary**

This chapter has:

- Outlined the writer's personal interest in and experience of joining an organisation at a senior level.
- Presented some of the costs of failing to join successfully.
- Suggested four factors potentially instrumental in causing failure: style and ways of operating, time frame, personal support, pressure to make personal changes.
- Identified four questions needing answers related to these.
- Noted some gaps in knowledge about what factors might be instrumental in SLJ success.
- Described two opposing scenarios: a supportive, confirming one and an unsupportive, disconfirming one, that an SLJ might experience and proposed that operationalising the supportive, confirming one would be likely to reduce the costs of failure of SLJs (and by extension enhance the likelihood of success).
- Explained the basis for the commissioning of the research.

The following chapter suggests that BA's findings and propositions resonate with the body of academic theory in the field of organisational socialisation. It describes how research in this field could be positioned; first, to meet the requirements of academia (in terms of a

doctoral level piece of work), and second to meet the requirements of a large commercial organisation (aiming to save the costs of SLJ turnover and improve the quality of SLJ experience in fitting in and getting on).

## **CHAPTER TWO: ORGANISATIONAL SOCIALISATION (OS)**

The previous account, based on personal experience and some initial pilot studies, indicated that a number of management theories may be appropriate to begin a wider ranging and research based study of SLJs. For example, studies of managerial roles, communication, stress, conflict and career are all germane to SLJs' experiences and could throw light on factors for success, or lack of it. (See, for example, Sisson 1989; Wood and Payne 1998; Hardy and Palmer 2000). All these sub-disciplines were explored, but the one appearing both inclusive and directly relevant, was that of organisational socialisation (OS). This is because studies of socialisation include not only the process whereby new recruits are selected and subjected to organisational influences, but also the context in which this takes place.

The following section starts by considering definitions of organisational socialisation, illustrating how these map to BA's findings. It goes on to explain further why this appeared to be an appropriate field in which to start the formal research effort and closes by arguing that OS is an appropriate conceptual lens through which to examine the content of this research.

### **Locating the OS field**

Choosing organisational socialisation as an appropriate field of research involved four activities. Presenting as sequential they were, in practice, iterative. The four activities were reflection on existing clues, discussion with others, computer keyword search and literature scan.

#### **Reflection on existing clues**

The first activity was to consider which existing clues and information could help identify a relevant theoretical field in which to gain further understanding of the issues.



BA's work was a practical and pragmatic approach to a particular organisational problem. The information to hand was largely anecdotal, circumstantial and untested, and was likely to have been partial in its identification of what SLJs experienced. Even so, it seemed to offer two clear pointers towards the theoretical field.

First, SLJs appeared to have trouble getting to grips with what can broadly be described as 'the way we do things round here' (ways of navigating round the organisation, style and ways of operating, behaviours that would get things done). Related to this, SLJs had issues in fitting into the organisation.

Second, SLJs seemed to have to go through a process of learning about the organisation in order that they could then get on in it.

### **Discussion with others**

The second activity involved discussing the issue with others and asking for suggestions on possible research fields. Organisational behaviour came top of the list. The task was then to identify a more precise location. Further discussions took place with BA staff and with business school academics. The discussions focused around the two pointers and sought lines for follow-up and investigation. Some possible links were suggested: theories of knowledge management, social identity, organisation culture and climate, mentoring, organisation identity, and learning. These were noted for later consideration.

### **Computer keyword search**

The third activity involved computer keyword search using combinations of 'culture' 'learning', 'organisation behaviour', 'socialisation', 'induction', and orientation'. Using these keywords, several English language journal articles were identified and a selection obtained. Particularly notable were four articles reviewing the field of organisational

socialisation (Fisher 1986; Wanous and Colella 1989; Saks and Ashforth 1997; Bauer, Morrison and Callister 1998) which appeared to be concerned with exactly the same issues that BA had highlighted in reference to its SLJs.

**Literature scan**

Given the apparent closeness of fit between the literature and the nature of the organisational problem, a decision was made at this stage to focus on organisational socialisation as the theoretical field to explore. Other factors which influenced this decision were the researcher’s own interest in the subject and the support it elicited from the sponsor of the research, together with the availability of resources required for the investigation (time, availability of material, skills and expertise of researcher).

This literature scan also identified the field for a much more detailed literature review that forms the body of the next chapter. However, the review begins here by considering some definitions of OS in order to show why this field was selected.

**Definitions of OS**

No single commonly used or generally agreed definition of organisational socialisation is evident in OS literature. Indeed, researchers in this fragmented field (Fisher 1986; Wanous and Colella 1989) tend towards almost individual definitions as Table 2 illustrates.

**TABLE 2: DEFINITIONS OF ORGANISATIONAL SOCIALISATION**

Author	Definition
Schein (1968:3)	'The concept (of organisational socialisation) refers to the process by which a new member learns the value system, the norms, and the required behaviour patterns of the society, organisation or group which he is entering. The learning is defined as the price of membership'.
Van Maanen (1976:67)	'Organisational socialisation refers to the process by which a person learns the values, norms and required behaviours which permit him to participate as a member of the organisation'.

Van Maanen J and Schein, E.H. (1979:211)	'In its most general sense organisational socialisation is the process by which an individual acquires the social knowledge and skills necessary to assume an organisational role'.
Louis (1980)	Organisational socialisation is the process through which organisational culture is perpetuated, by which newcomers learn the appropriate roles and behaviours to become effective and participating members.
Feldman (1981:309)	'Defined globally, organisational socialisation is the process by which employees are transformed from organisation outsiders to participating and effective members'.
Pascale (1985:17, 26)	<p>'Socialisation encompasses the process of being made a member of a group, learning the ropes, and being taught how one must communicate and interact to get things done'.</p> <p>'The aim of socialisation is to establish a base of attitudes, habits and values that foster co-operation, integrity and communication'.</p>
Fisher (1986:102)	'Organisational socialisation focuses on the learning of organisation specific modes of behaving and thinking'.
Wanous (1992)	Socialisation concerns the ways in which newcomers change and adapt to the organisation. The types of changes are learning new roles, norms and values. In other words learning what is 'acceptable' behaviour.
Preston (1993:24)	'Socialisation will be defined as the process of diagnosing and learning the culture of the organisation in which the new manager finds himself'.
Nonaka and Takeuchi, (1995:62)	'Socialisation is a process of sharing experiences and thereby creating tacit knowledge such as shared mental models and technical skills'.
Holton (1996:234)	'Socialisation researchers have traditionally focused on the process newcomers go through to learn the values, norms, and culture of an organisation and adapt to new roles'.
Anakwe and Greenhaus (1999:2)	'Effective socialisation is defined as the criteria through which the success of the organisation's socialisation programmes and the newcomer's success through the entire process is evaluated. It is conceptualised as the primary outcome of the socialisation process that will enhance the achievement of individual and organisational outcomes'.

Despite the variation in emphasis and content amongst the definitions, four consistent and common themes emerge:

1. Joiners need to learn 'the way we do things round here', including ways of behaving, operating, and thinking as well as norms and values. (The fitting in aspects.)
2. By implication the learning process is time related. (Time relatedness is not stated in the definitions but becomes evident in discussions within the studies, particularly stage models ones, and in the way many of them are designed.)
3. Newcomers are involved in learning aspects of the organisation from others. (Somewhat surprisingly it is not stated in any definition which people the newcomers are learning from.)
4. Newcomers need to pay the price of membership (Schein 1968) in order to become fully effective in their new role. (The getting on aspects.)

These four themes seemed remarkably congruent with the work done in BA, which noted that four factors appeared key in determining SLJs' success or failure in their new role as Table 3 below illustrates.

**TABLE 3: KEY FACTORS IN DETERMINING SLJ SUCCESS**

<b>Themes emerging from definitions of organisational socialisation in the literature</b>	<b>Factors appearing key in determining SLJs' success or failure in their new BA role</b>
Joiners need to learn 'the way we do things round here' – including ways of behaving, operating, and thinking	The style and ways of operating to make performance in their role effective: what was acceptable and what was not. (How do SLJs get to grips with learning the way to fit in and get on?)
By implication the learning process is time related	The time pressure SLJs felt under to prove they could perform to expectation. (Why are some people quicker at fitting in and getting on than other people?)
Newcomers are involved in learning aspects of the organisation from others	The navigation aspects (where to go for things) which is largely influenced by the attributes and attitudes of those who have a 'stakeholding' in the role and in the SLJs' success. The main stakeholders observed being the SLJs' managers, peer group, staff, and the organisation. (Who is key in helping them fit in and get on?)
Newcomers need to pay the price of membership (Schein 1968) in order to	The tension between maintaining certain personal attributes and the pressure SLJs felt



become fully effective in their new role	under to make personal changes in order to be effective in their role. How to behave to get things done. (How do SLJs help themselves fit in and get on?)
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The congruence illustrated suggested that OS theory would be helpful in providing the underpinning of this research. It would also have the added benefit of providing a 'useful' set of results with practical benefits to BA.

### **OS as the focus of this research**

Organisational socialisation is a broad topic that leads to a large, but fragmented, body of empirical work (Wanous and Colella 1989:98; Fisher 1986:101). Research on OS has been criticised for producing descriptive theories relevant only to specific socialisation settings (Louis 1980:234), with little in the way of theory development or integration of the various perspectives, concepts or processes occurring. Consequently the view exists that there is no unifying and coherent 'theory' of socialisation (Saks and Ashforth 1997:235). If one is to be developed then, in order for it to be of value to researchers and laymen alike, 'it must transcend the particular and peculiar and aim for the general and typical' (Van Maanen 1979:216).

Neither is OS a field standing still. A number of key issues that urgently require further research have been described. These include the identification of what is learned by newcomers during socialisation (Louis 1980:234; Ostroff and Kozlowski 1993:172; Chao et al 1994:730,731; Ashforth, Saks and Lee 1998:921; Anakwe and Greenhaus 1999:2; Klein and Weaver 2000:11). The effectiveness and outcomes of the socialisation process (Feldman 1981:316; Reichers 1987:281; Allen and Meyer 1990:854; Ostroff and Kozlowski 1992:868; Chao et al 1994:730; Ashforth and Saks 1996:17; Holton 1996:247; Anakwe and Greenhaus 1999:1). The role of other people in the socialisation of newcomers (Reichers 1987:285; Chatman 1989:335; Ostroff and Kozlowski 1992:868; Ostroff and Kozlowski 1993:182; Preston 1993:30; Saks and Ashforth 1997:250). The

impact on the newcomer of the stakeholders and role context (West, Nicholson and Rees 1987:111; Preston 1993:31; Saks and Ashforth 1997:265; Ashforth, Saks and Lee 1998:921; Whetten and Godfrey 1998:200). The expansion of the focus beyond newcomers (Schein 1968; Jones 1983; Fisher 1986; Ostroff and Kozlowski 1992; Preston 1993; Chao et al 1994; Fineman 1996; Holton 1996; Saks and Ashforth 1997; Saks and Ashforth 1997, 1998). And the types of consciously planned OS interventions and practices most likely to facilitate fitting in and getting on (Van Maanen 1979; Feldman 1981; Jones 1986; Schuler and Jackson 1987; West, Nicholson, Rees 1987; Ostroff and Kozlowski 1992; Preston 1993; Ferner1994; Dutton, Dukerich, Harquail 1994; Nonaka and Takeuchi 1995; Saks and Ashforth 1997, 1998; Whetten and Godfrey 1998; Klein and Weaver 2000).

**Links between OS key issues and BA’s experience with SLJs**

There seemed to be close correspondences between existing definitions of OS and what BA was interested in. There was additional correspondence between aspects which had been identified by researchers as areas for further work and those aspects of joining that British Airways highlighted as being of interest. Table 4 below summarises this:

**TABLE 4: OS AREAS FOR FURTHER WORK**

<b>Areas for research identified in academic work</b>	<b>Questions identified by British Airways</b>
What is learned during socialisation	How do SLJs get to grips with learning the way to fit in and get on?
The effectiveness and outcomes of the socialisation process	Why are some people quicker at fitting in and getting on than others?
The role of other people in the socialisation of newcomers	Who is key to helping SLJs fit in and get on?
The impact on the newcomer of the stakeholders and role context	How do SLJs help themselves fit in and get on?

## **Summary**

This section has indicated that there is currently no one unifying theory of OS, but that it is a field in which there is both the scope and the need for further work in terms of research design and of extending knowledge of aspects of OS. It was notable that the areas which have been identified by researchers for knowledge extension were linked to the problem areas that BA had identified in helping SLJs fit in and get on in the organisation. Given this, it was suggested that OS was an appropriate field for study with the potential to extend theoretical knowledge and to suggest a course of practical action in an organisation.

## **OS as a conceptual lens**

Although OS may be an appropriate field of study, the method of its selection may have overlooked other potentially appropriate fields. Some of these theoretical fields have already been mentioned, i.e. knowledge management, social identity, organisation culture and climate, mentoring, organisation identity, and learning. Given the evidence presented so far, OS provided a substantially appropriate conceptual lens through which to analyse the current research. The selection of this field inevitably excludes other fields. However, in the view of the researcher this does not matter a great deal, so long as the research process and outcomes within the selected field conform to the criteria for 'good' research.

Leedy (1997:46) quoting Kahn (1994) suggests that good research asks important questions and offers 'the potential to yield a seminal observation - one that creates truly new knowledge, leads to new ways of thinking, and lays the foundation for further research in the field.'

The following section first discusses the importance of the question and second considers its potential to yield a 'seminal observation'.

## **The importance of the question**

Up to this point no research question has been explicitly stated. Rather, four factors have been identified as integral to theoretical OS research, and shown to be congruent with factors identified by BA as appearing to impact on an SLJ's ability to fit in and get on. In addition BA developed two scenarios, together with some propositions for thorough research based in recognised theory. Alongside these, BA identified four questions, detailed above, which had the potential to be reframed as valid and worthwhile research questions.

For all the reasons outlined in Chapter One, BA felt the questions to be important. As a check on whether other organisations might feel the same, a number were approached (Appendix 1) to ascertain the level of interest in the questions. It appeared that at the observation and anecdote level other organisations had experienced similar issues with SLJs and were interested in any answers produced by research. As noted, the questions BA raised also picked up on some of the areas for further research identified by theorists in the OS field.

From the OS theory and the BA experience an overall question emerged: 'What is the extent of the relationship between fitting in and getting on?' From the evidence presented it appeared that this question was an 'important' research question with the potential to yield useful and practical applications for BA. This research question is refined and developed later (Chapter Four) in the thesis.

## **Yielding 'a seminal observation'**

It has already been mentioned that OS theory is fragmented and that there have been a number of calls for the development of a unifying theory. The nature of the BA problem offered the opportunity to re-examine OS from a different perspective and so contribute to developing theoretical OS thinking.



Easterby-Smith et al (1996:9) state that doctoral work needs to produce theoretical outcomes and that the easiest way to do this is either to replicate known studies or to look at a practical problem from different theoretical perspectives. They suggest that if both pure and applied elements are incorporated in the research a richer site for discovery is created. (These statements and suggestions are returned to in Chapter Four).

As already indicated, the starting point was the identification of a practical problem in BA concerning the difficulty that some SLJs have fitting in and getting on. Researching these issues would involve working with the 'client' - in this case the Human Resources Department - to supply some solutions to the problem. This work could be described as applied research providing it included considerations of not only the 'what' questions but also the 'why' questions (Easterby-Smith et al 1996:7).

Thus it appeared at this stage that the study was likely to contain elements of both pure and applied research. Additionally it had the apparent potential to yield, if not the 'seminal observation', at least a lead into 'new ways of thinking' or a pointer towards 'further research in the field' (Leedy 1997:46).

## **Summary**

This chapter considered the importance of the research question, and confirmed that the pure and applied research envisaged had the potential to extend theoretical knowledge in the field of OS and to provide practical help to BA. On these two counts the decision was confirmed to answer the overall research question 'What is the extent of the relationship between fitting in and getting on?' using the conceptual lens of OS.

## CHAPTER THREE: SETTING THE STAGE

This chapter opens by suggesting that OS began as a substantive research field in the mid-1970s. It moves on to discuss, in relation to the literature, the four themes arising from the definitions of OS tabled earlier. A presentation follows of five models of OS which emerge from the literature. Then considered are some of the methodological issues which researchers in the field have identified. Finally the results and findings of previous studies are discussed.

A review of OS literature suggests that there are three 'founding fathers' of organisation socialisation - Edgar Schein, John Van Maanen and Daniel Charles Feldman. Schein published in the field from 1963 onwards, Van Maanen from 1973 onwards and Feldman from 1976 onwards.

In 1976, Feldman published *A Contingency Theory of Socialisation* and in 1979 Van Maanen and Schein jointly published *Toward a Theory of Organisational Socialisation*. It is notable that these two publications are the ones referred to and built on by the majority of subsequent OS research studies. Although there are earlier references to the more general field of socialisation (Wanous and Colella, 1989), there are no consistently referenced earlier publications on organisational socialisation theory. For this reason the mid-1970s are a convenient starting date from which to review the OS literature.

The decision to start from this date can be supported by reference to the bibliographies of the four literature reviews on OS which have been published in the past fifteen years (Fisher 1986; Wanous and Colella 1989; Saks and Ashforth 1997; Bauer, Morrison and Callister 1998). From these it is evident that all four reviewers take work dating from the mid-1970s as their baseline, and it is on that basis that this review does likewise.

Comparison of the four literature reviews reveals that they are all comprehensive in their scope as well as consistent in both the research reviewed and the approach taken. Each reviewer starts with a definition of organisational socialisation, discusses the various models of socialisation presented in the research, assesses the methodological issues 'plaguing research in this domain' (Bauer, Morrison and Callister:1998 152), considers the results and findings, and finally presents conclusions and the way forward. The following sections use the previous reviewers' approaches as a framework to explore each of the aspects mentioned in relation to the literature as a whole.

## **Themes arising from the definitions of OS**

In an earlier section a number of definitions of OS were tabled and four themes identified which could be inferred from the definitions. It may be that the number of definitions arises because there is no unifying theory of OS (Saks and Ashforth 1997:235). It is interesting to note that the four published literature reviews do not mention the number of definitions or the lack of one definition. In the absence of a single definition, what follows is a discussion of the four themes that were extracted from the various definitions.

### **Theme 1: Newcomers need to learn 'the way we do things round here' (the fitting-in aspects)**

Although researchers appear to agree that OS involves a process of learning about the organisation, they seem uncertain over what newcomers could and should learn. This may be because learning is not a unitary concept (Schein 1993:86). In the OS literature reviewed, the focus was on the acquisition of tacit knowledge about the culture - as opposed to habit and skill learning, or learned anxiety (Schein 1993:86) - and included discussion on the behaviours, attitudes, and values needed for getting on in the culture. It is notable that information (explicit knowledge) was not discussed in the literature

reviewed, beyond a comment by Morrison (1995:2) that 'a general typology of the information that newcomers must acquire upon entry into the organisation is non-existent'.

Given the agreement (as evidenced in the definitions) that culture must be learned by the newcomer if he 'is to get along at all' (Schein 1985:2), it might be assumed that there is an agreed definition of 'culture'. However, this is not the case. Definitions of 'culture' in the OS literature vary (Schein 1985:9; Schein, 1993:86; Ashforth, Saks and Lee 1998; Pascale 1985:26; Allen and Meyer 1990:852). It seems reasonable to conclude that where studies begin from quite different definitions of culture, their investigations of learning the culture of an organisation are not necessarily considering the same 'thing' from the same perspective.

Even if researchers were working to a common definition of culture, it would be unwise to assume that they were necessarily considering the same thing. What newcomers need to learn about the culture is largely informal, contextual, and unofficial (Holton 1996) and aspects of it 'are so subtle and all-pervasive that they are very difficult to identify' (Morgan 1997:143). For example, a newcomer needs to learn the acceptable mannerisms, dress and talk associated with his or her position, the leeway that is acceptable (Fineman 1996:21), and the even more subtle kinds of organisational values which may be little understood by the senior people in the organisation (Schein 1968:7).

So in considering the need for the newcomer to learn 'the way we do things round here', a critical issue arises. It is not evident from the OS literature what specific aspects of a culture need to be learned during the socialisation process. This may be because learning the culture is essentially a process of acquiring situationally specific tacit knowledge at an individual level. What a newcomer to one organisation needs to learn may not be the same as the newcomer to another (Ashforth and Mael 1989:26; Louis 1980:233). Burdett (1991:24) develops this theme in suggesting that 'learning in a new



environment, in large measure, depends on knowing what it is that one should know and does not.'

## **Theme 2: By implication the learning process is time related**

It is not easy to determine how long a socialisation process might be expected to take 'given the lack of consensus on the specific time frames of the transition process from outsider to insider' (Ashforth, Saks and Lee 1988:907). Research on the 'rate at which newcomers adjust and are socialised is an important and largely overlooked outcome variable in the socialisation literature' (Reichers 1987:279).

Where the OS literature does consider time frames is in the review of OS stage models (Feldman 1976; Louis 1980; Gabarro 1985; Van Maanen 1979). Even within stage models, however, there is little certainty on likely timescales, as it is recognised that a number of factors shape a newcomer's progress. These factors include the newcomer's experience. For example, 'experience produces well-developed schemas which enable people to acquire new knowledge at a rapid pace' (Reichers, Wanous and Steele 1994). They also include his style and personal needs, his relationship with key people, and whether his style conflicts with that of his boss (Gabarro 1985:8).

Other researchers reject the notion that socialisation is a process which is time-bound. They take the view that it is a lifelong, ongoing process, as important for established organisational members as it is for newcomers, and relevant whenever an individual crosses a boundary (Fisher 1986:102; Chao et al 1994:731; Saks and Ashforth 1997:271). 'From this standpoint OS is ubiquitous, persistent and forever problematic' (Van Maanen 1979:213).

From a managerial rather than an academic perspective the view that OS is continuous seems to make intuitive sense. Experience points to the value of the ongoing socialisation of all employees - particularly given the rapid speed of change of today's organisations and the ad hoc observation that many respected and long serving staff fall ignominiously from grace when the context changes. The story below illustrates this:

**Taken from The Times, 16 June 2001**

*A bus driver has been sacked for wearing his father's cloth cap at the wheel. Mr Turnbull, 64 who has been a driver for 38 years with Stagecoach, was fired three months before his retirement after he ignored a series of requests to take off the cap.*

*Madi Pilgrim, operations director for Stagecoach, said the company had given him 'every opportunity' to abandon his cap. 'He was not wearing the correct new uniform and in my view we were being completely reasonable.'*

### **Theme 3: Newcomers are involved in learning aspects of the organisation from others**

Reichers (1987:285) noted that 'the significance of insiders as agents of socialisation has not received much attention in prior research'. Since he wrote that, however, it has received a certain amount of attention, as the following summary indicates.

Several studies reviewed (Miller and Jablin 1991; Nonaka and Takeuchi 1995; Holton 1996; Morgan 1997) make the point that socialisation starts with building a 'field' of social interaction. It is only by doing this that the necessary conditions for learning about the organisation can be created and the learning itself transmitted.

Who gets to play on the 'field' of social interaction is the subject of discussion in several of the studies reviewed. Among the most frequently mentioned players are the newcomer,

who is not a passive agent subject to environmental forces (Chatman 1989:337) but a proactive participant in the socialisation process (Holton and Russell 1997:465). The newcomer's boss 'who really has the power to create the climate which will lead to rebellion, conformity, or creative individualism' in the newcomer (Schein 1968:15) and who contributes to his effective socialisation and long term career success (Anakwe and Greenhaus 1999:10). The 'experienced colleagues' who form the newcomer's peer group (Anakwe and Greenhaus 1999:8). The newcomer's co-workers and staff who give or withhold support (Pascale 1985:17; Schein 1985:7; Miller and Jablin 1991:92; Ostroff and Kozlowski 1992:851; Saks and Ashforth 1997:250). And the organisation which, to extend the playing field analogy, seeks to control the game (Pascale 1985:23; Evans and Lorange 1989:153; Ferner 1994:86). Mentors, (Dose 1997; Anakwe and Greenhaus 1999:9), developers (Preston 1993:32) search consultants (Burdett 1991:18), and 'use of a third party' (Burdett 1991:19) are also mentioned as having an invaluable role in newcomer integration.

In recognising the importance of interpersonal interactions in the socialisation process, a number of observations are made about the possible barriers to interaction between the newcomer and the other agents of socialisation.

These include the recognition that newcomer behaviour may prevent him from interacting effectively with established organisational members (Jones 1983:467). That insiders may not know how to facilitate a newcomer's socialisation (Ostroff and Kozlowski 1992:872). That individuals may not want to share their knowledge 'there is usually no mandate that an individual must share their knowledge for the greater good' (Rose 1997:35). And that people do not always realise, at least overtly, what they learn from each other, sometimes not even that they learn from each other (Mintzberg et al 1996:63)

#### **Theme 4: Newcomers need to pay the price of membership (Schein 1968) in order to become fully effective in their new role. (The getting on aspects)**

'The ways in which individuals learn the culture are as diverse as the facets of it to which they are exposed' (Gundry 1994:1). Even so there appear to be certain attributes that a newcomer needs to possess or to exhibit in order to learn enough about the ways of the organisation to get on in it. It seems that if a newcomer can demonstrate these attributes they will be able to learn the culture and in doing so will have paid 'the price of membership'. Six attributes are commonly mentioned in OS literature as necessary for the newcomer to get on:

1. An ability to develop ties to co-workers via the establishment of networks, coalitions and friendships (Pascale 1985:24; Fineman 1996:133; Carroll and Teo 1996:437).
2. Strong motivation to learn what is needed (Schein 1968:5).
3. A positive learning approach (Klein and Weaver 2000:8; Chao et al 1994:742).
4. Personal competence in reading situations and getting them right: requiring commitment, insight, subtlety, intuition and an informed perspective (Fineman 1996:184; Burdett 1991:24; Morgan 1997:353; Jones 1983:466).
5. The possession of values either matching those of the organisation, or adaptable to them (Chatman 1989:342; Klein and Weaver 2000:10; Dose 1997:9).
6. An ability of the newcomer to align his personal knowledge, experience, values and sense of importance to the organisation's values, goals and plans (Rose 1997:22).

As no one researcher has mentioned all six attributes it is possible that newcomers do not need to exhibit all attributes in equal measure, and that they may be able to get on without demonstrating some of them at all. At the same time, unlikely as it is that this list of attributes is exhaustive, it nevertheless covers a broad base.

#### **Summary**

This section has considered the four themes emerging from the various definitions of OS presenting in the literature. The implication is that if common ground is identified, then a



unifying definition of OS may be developed. Whether a unifying definition would be a 'good thing' in research terms has not been considered, but perhaps should be in future work. What is notable is that four reviewers of the literature neither discuss the varying definitions of organisational socialisation nor appear to view as problematic the fact that studies appear to be done from very different definition focuses.

The following section considers the various models of OS that have been developed. It is not surprising that just as there is no one definition and no one theory of OS, there is no one model of OS.

## **Models of OS**

Four main types of predictive, generalisable (Wanous and Colella 1989:99) organisational socialisation models appear in the literature. These are stage models, tactics models, process models and content models.

Stage models consider what the newcomer is experiencing over a period of time and seek to explain the sequence and timing of changes that occur as newcomers are transformed from outsiders to insiders (Bauer et al 1998:153). Tactics models consider aspects of a particular dimension of organisationally initiated response to newcomers in relation to its opposite. Process models consider how the process of socialisation occurs by identifying variables that influence the socialisation process and its outcomes and content models consider both what is learned during socialisation and how it is learned.

It is noteworthy that researchers have not developed much further the 'interactionist' models advocated by Jones (1983). Most research has focused on either the effects of contextual factors or the effects of newcomer attributes, 'failing to consider how these factors may interactively shape the course of socialisation' (Bauer et al 1998:162).

The following section considers both the four models appearing in the literature and the advocated interactionist model.

**Stage models**

As the four reviews of the OS literature - mentioned in the introduction to this chapter - cover stage models, it is not proposed to cover that ground again. However, Wanous's (1992) table comparing four stage models: those of Buchanan (1974), Feldman (1976a, 1976b), Porter, Lawler and Hackman (1975), Schein (1978) and his identification of some of the themes common to stage models, taken together with his own integrative framework, provide a useful summary. Wanous notes a number of common themes. Each is defined in terms of the individual's view. Each includes a pre-entry stage. The respective definitions of the stages are rather broad. The models are based primarily on events rather than just the passage of time - the homogeneity of the events within each stage serving to differentiate that stage from the next.

Taking the four models and the common themes, Wanous presents his four-stage model (developed in 1980) which integrates those he has compared. Table 5 below illustrates this:

**TABLE 5: WANOUS'S (1980) STAGES IN THE SOCIALISATION PROCESS**

<b>Wanous (1980) Stages in the socialisation process</b>	
Stage 1	Confronting and accepting organisation reality
Stage 2	Achieving role clarity
Stage 3	Locating oneself in the organisational context
Stage 4	Detecting signposts of successful socialisation

Wanous's discussion of the research done on stage models confirms Fisher's (1986) view that stage models might provide useful conceptual frameworks, but that they should not be treated as strict predictive models. He gives four reasons for this. First, the stages of socialisation do not necessarily proceed in a sequential fashion. Second, as mentioned earlier, it is not clear or predictable at what rate a newcomer goes through the stages. Third, it is also not clear what factors or interventions will accelerate the rate of progress

through the stages. Reichers et al (1994:18) have suggested (though not specifically in relation to stage models) that 'the longer the (newcomer's) experience and the more relevant to the new situation, the less socialisation will be necessary to speed adjustment and develop appropriate performance levels'. Finally, 'scholars have not adequately addressed what it means to say that socialisation is successful' (Bauer et al 1998:196).

It is of interest to note that OS researchers have not developed stage models of this type since the 1980s, possibly because of the problems associated with them. But even as late as 1997 they 'still remain the prevailing framework for understanding the socialisation process' (Saks and Ashworth 1997:235).

Personal experience confirms that stage models have a certain practical utility and appear to have entered popular management consciousness. For example, numbers of outplacement and search firms sell first 100-day executive coaching programmes as described below:

The facts show that the first 100 days in a new role are critical. One in four new employees consider an early exit if they encounter unforeseen problems. Understanding the issues that can arise and planning ahead to avoid them can help make those early days in a role so much more successful. Getting to understand the culture, appreciating 'how things are done around here', ensuring you make an appropriate impact are all critical elements of the new role.

Working with an individual over the first 100 days, we act as an independent external resource, helping them to identify success strategies which work for them. A series of inter-linked coaching sessions over a four month period help the new recruit settle in and add value more quickly.

Executive Development, CEDAR International

Given this, it is interesting to note that the OS literature omits any discussion of practical application of the stage models. It appears that the links between them and their use in day-to-day organisational life are of little interest to researchers. Logic and experience of working in several large, complicated, commercial organisations suggest that stage models could provide useful guidance to HR staff and newcomers, although not as an accurate prognosis or predictor of what might actually happen.

### Tactics models

'The phrase "tactics of OS" refers to the ways in which the experiences of individuals in transition from one role to another are structured for them by others in the organisation' (Van Maanen 1979:230). These 'experiences' are also described as 'dimensions or strategies' (Fisher 1986:129) and 'organisational factors' (Bauer et al 1998:154).

The most accepted framework for understanding this process was developed by Van Maanen and Schein (1979). They identified six major tactical dimensions (shown in Table 6) which 'characterise the structural side of OS' (Van Maanen and Schein 1979:232).

**TABLE 6: THE TACTICS OF OS (VAN MAANEN AND SCHEIN 1979)**

Tactic	Terms defined
Collective versus individual	Collective being the way a group of newcomers are taken through a common set of experiences e.g. a graduate intake to an organisation. Individual being the process of introducing new recruits singly and with no common process to the organisation.
Formal versus informal	Formal being the way newcomers are segregated from others in the workforce while undergoing basic training. Informal being the opposite: where no special distinction is drawn between the newcomers and the rest of the workforce.
Sequential versus random	Sequential being the method of prescribing steps in a newcomer's experience: typically a graduate cohort will experience the organisation in a particular sequence. Random being the opposite: no prescribed order or sequence and possibly quite ad hoc.
Fixed versus variable	Fixed being the time taken to work through the steps of the process. The newcomer knows the timetable of events. Variable being not time bounded. (The newcomer may have no idea when the socialisation process is finished.)
Serial versus disjunctive	Serial being the grooming of newcomers by insiders holding a similar role. Disjunctive being the process of a newcomer finding out for himself without the benefit of any role models.



Investiture versus divestiture	Investiture being the ratification and endorsement of the characteristics the newcomer brings to the organisation. Divestiture being the extent to which a newcomer is stripped of his identity in order to rebuild it in the model required by the organisation. (As in people becoming IBMers for example.)
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Van Maanen and Schein (1979) proposed and predicted that the relative use of a particular tactic would affect the way in which a newcomer would respond to a new role. According to their theory newcomers respond to their roles differently because the socialisation tactics used by organisations 'shape the information newcomers receive' (Jones 1986:263).

Socialisation tactics have been examined by a number of researchers as Bauer et al (1998) list: (Jones 1986; Allen and Meyer 1990; Baker and Feldman 1990; King and Sethi 1992; Laker and Steffy 1995; Mignerey, Rubin and Gordon,1995; Ashforth and Saks 1996; Saks and Ashforth 1997) resulting in a number of suggestions for further work (Bauer et al 1998:163). Similarly, Saks and Ashforth (1997:242) note that 'In the past five years there have been 11 published studies on socialisation tactics'.

Reading the discussions on the tactics of OS from a practical management perspective reveals what appear to be a number of gaps. For example, researchers do not question the underlying validity of the theory in today's context where the employee/employer psychological contract is very different from when the tactics were proposed more than thirty years ago. They seem to imply that organisations consciously choose specific tactics to use in socialising newcomers. Experience and observation suggest that this is unlikely. (Although it could be organisationally useful to see some pointers towards making conscious choices which relate OS activity to desired outcomes.) The tactics are not a comprehensive set. This is a fact noted by Van Maanen and Schein (1979:232) who stated 'we do not assert here that this list is exhaustive ... the list may well be infinite ...'. But there is reference in the literature to extending the set by only two other tactics: tournament versus contest and open versus closed (Saks and Ashforth 1997). Others

that could be suggested (again based on observation and experience) include power structures versus centres of influence, hierarchies versus networks, formal communications versus grapevine and gossip, espoused theories versus theories in use, and learning versus doing. There seems to be little discussion about the continuum aspects of each dimension or the relative interactions between and among them.

Given their confirmed place in the development of organisational socialisation theory it seems reasonable to question why reviewers have not taken a more critical stance in regard to the socialisation tactics.

### **Process models**

Because organisational socialisation has traditionally been viewed as both structured and directed from the organisation to the newcomer, much of the research points this way. One reason for the need for structured socialisation has been identified by Ashforth, Saks and Lee (1998), who make the point that large organisations are inherently complex and that size increases the need for institutionalised socialisation. Thus processes are developed which will help the newcomer to navigate within the organisation.

Other reasons that might reflect the aims and purpose of OS, include learning the culture (as previously discussed), social control, transmitting and maintaining cultural values, and knowledge development. It is notable that there is little discussion in the OS literature of why socialisation is important and necessary, a topic discussed later in this chapter.

What follows now is a brief discussion of some of the organisational process model variables that currently receive most research attention. They are the impact of organisational operations: goals and values, job characteristics, recruitment and orientation practices, informal interactions with insiders and organisation responses to the newcomer.

## **Organisational operations**

### **Organisational goals and values**

Chatman remarks that 'few researchers have considered the importance of the context at the organisational level, such as an organisation's system of norms and values that have a great deal of influence over people's behaviours' (Chatman 1989:335), and indeed the four OS literature reviews mentioned do not discuss these aspects at all. This is surprising given Schein's (1968) view that the maintenance of the organisation involves each newcomer learning the patterns of values, norms and behaviours he described as being the basic goals of the organisation. (Including the preferred means by which these goals are attained, the basic responsibilities of the member in the role that is being granted to him by the organisation and the behaviour patterns which are required for effective maintenance in the role. And which also include a set of rules or principles that pertain to the identity and integrity of the organisation.)

A study by Chao et al (1994) found that the organisational goals and values dimension significantly differed from other socialisation dimensions in its ability to predict organisational turnover and career effectiveness. This is a finding that supports that of Chatman (1989) who noted that higher levels of person-organisation fit exist when there is congruence between the norms and values of the organisation and the values of individuals.

### **Job characteristics**

As three of the four literature reviews consider job characteristics in relation to how readily the newcomer becomes socialised (Fisher 1980; Wanous and Colella 1989; Bauer et al 1998) it is not proposed to expand on these here.

However, it is interesting to note that in terms of the management press self-help books, those about joining new organisations focus primarily on the new job. The following popular titles (as defined by Amazon's best sellers in the range) are indicative of this:

*Keeping Your Job: survive and succeed in the new job* (Mendlin and Polonsky, 2000); *How to Survive Your First Year in a New Job* (Brown, 1999); *How to Hit the Ground Running in Your New Job* (Clemens and Dolph, 1995); *Find the Bathroom First: Starting Your New Job on the Right Foot* (Blitzer and Reynolds-Rush, 1999). These suggest that in changing organisations newcomers are more interested in job characteristics and processes than in other organisational characteristics and processes.

### **Recruitment and orientation practices**

Bauer et al (1998) report that few socialisation studies have assessed the effects of actual recruitment practices on socialisation, and none of the other three literature reviews mention recruitment processes as being instrumental in OS. However, Bauer does briefly review some studies on met expectations 'which are theorised to be heavily influenced by recruitment' (Bauer et al 1998:166).

Saks and Ashforth (1997) review aspects of socialisation training, commenting that research has tended to focus on either training or socialisation and that there is a need to integrate the two streams. Developing this, Klein and Weaver (2000) point out that the socialisation scale presented by Chao et al (1994) is a potentially useful measure by which to evaluate whether changes in socialisation have occurred as a result of orientation training or the implementation of other socialisation tactics.

In the organisations in which the researcher has worked there has been no observable tie up between induction training and other socialisation practices: newcomers appear to become socialised (or not) irrespective of whether or not they have participated in formal induction training. What is not obvious from observation is whether the rate of



socialisation is different between those who participate in induction training and those who do not, or whether the content of what is learned in the socialisation process is different between the groups.

### **Informal interactions with others**

As noted earlier in this study, what are commonly known as the 'agents' of socialisation play a key and integral role in the socialisation of newcomers. Because this topic has been summarised in the earlier section it will not be repeated here.

### **Organisational responses to the newcomer**

The question has been raised concerning the ability of an organisation to homogenise behaviour in the face of individual differences (Chatman 1989). There is one answer given in the literature reviewed. Rose (1997:24) suggests that organisations are powerful enough to do this, explaining that business structure, systems and processes are often quite hostile to new and innovative ideas. 'Too many new employees, upon making a suggestion for improvement or offering a new business concept, have heard the phrase "That's not how we do it around here."'

Louis (1980) notes that numerous studies have observed newcomer attitudes and value changes as a result of OS, but that few studies have attempted to document such changes during OS. Wanous and Colella (1989) review studies of organisational mechanisms that produce attitude change in the newcomer. Their conclusions are, first, that a newcomer is likely to experience a change in attitudes which corresponds to changing roles during the early stages of entry to the organisation; and, second, that newcomers are particularly susceptible to persuasion during the early socialisation period. Beyond that they make the comment that socialisation literature has treated the issue of attitude change in a rather simplistic manner.

Referring back to the comments made by some BA newcomers it seems in that organisation at least newcomers felt under pressure to change attitudes in order to conform to accepted norms and behaviours.

**Content models**

Chao et al (1994) made the point that there is a distinct division in the OS literature between two types of research. One kind examines the process of socialisation and the stages through which a newcomer passes as he develops into an organisational member. The other examines the content of socialisation; that is, what is actually learned during socialisation and how it is learned.

Bauer et al (1998) in their listing of socialisation studies note those which study OS content (Ostroff and Kozlowski 1992, 1993; Morrison 1993; Chao et al 1994; Kramer 1994; Holder 1995; Kramer et al 1995; Morrison 1995; Saks and Ashforth 1997).

From these, two sets of content domain, rooted in the studies quoted, emerge as dominant in the literature. Table 7 below illustrates:

**TABLE 7: WHAT NEWCOMERS LEARN**

<b>Ostroff and Kozlowski, (1992 1993)</b>	<b>Chao et al (1994)</b>
Job related tasks Work roles Group processes Organisational attributes (including culture and climate)	Performance proficiency Politics Language People Organisational goals and values History

A number of problems have been noted in relation to the content models of socialisation. Theorists and practitioners have tended to view the OS process as occurring in the same manner, regardless of whether the particular socialisation content was technical or social

information (Dose 1997). Then there is no general typology of the information that newcomers must acquire on entry to the organisation (Anakwe and Greenhaus 1999) and relationships between the learning of specific socialisation content areas and specific job outcomes are unknown (Chao et al 1994). Finally, there is very little focus on how newcomers learn (Bauer et al 1998).

What has not been seen as a problem but might be is that the literature reviewed makes no distinction between explicit and tacit content. (Each of the content domains listed above could be learned from either perspective). The involvement of theories of knowledge creation at this stage (Nonaka and Takeuchi 1995) might contribute to a wider debate on how newcomers learn about their organisations.

### **Interactionist (proactive) models**

Jones (1983) presented an interactionist model conceptualising the relationship between the newcomer, the situation, and the situation x newcomer interaction. He argued that the product of this three-way interaction determined the nature of the newcomer's subsequent behaviour in the organisation.

However, it was not until the 1990s that interactionist research emerged as the most important research area in the field of OS. The great strength of interactionist models is that they consider the effects that newcomers have on the situation. They recognise that people are not passive agents subject to environmental forces (Chatman 1989) but proactive participants playing an active role in the process of aligning themselves and their new environment (Holton and Russell 1997) and, by extension, potentially changing the organisation.

Both Saks and Ashforth (1997) and Bauer et al (1998) review a number of research studies that consider the interactions between newcomers and the organisation. For this

reason it is not proposed to discuss them further here. In the main, the studies focus on the various newcomer attributes brought to bear on the socialisation process, rather than other aspects of the setting that may facilitate interaction between newcomers and insiders. The studies they discuss include the effects of newcomer work experience, values, personality attributes and behaviours (personality attributes and behaviours are discussed in more detail in an earlier chapter of this study) together with demographic characteristics.

Common sense suggests that socialisation is not a one-way process from organisation to newcomer. It would seem likely that anyone who joins an organisation and begins the process of fitting in and getting on in it, interacts and proacts with it in a complex and idiosyncratic way. The earlier quotes from BA staff, supported by what is implied in the foregoing review of the literature, suggest that one of the aims of socialisation is to learn the culture. The evidence presented here suggests further that this is an essentially interactive process. It follows then that those OS theories taking an interactionist stance are likely to offer organisations and their newcomers insights into how joining can be made a successful experience.

## **Summary**

The preceding section has considered five models of OS (stage, tactics, process, content and interactionist). For each of the models discussed some observations have been made regarding the practical utility of the models. The following section discusses some of the methodological issues identified as troublesome in the OS literature.



## **The methodological issues ‘plaguing research in this domain’ (Bauer, Morrison and Callister 1998:52)**

Previous sections have discussed the different definitions of OS, and the various models of OS that exist. It may be these factors which have led to the observation noted that the field of OS is fragmented, with no unifying and coherent theory.

Other factors contributing to this fragmentation may be methodological ones. A number of aspects of OS research design and methodology are consistently criticised across the literature. That is to say, the criticisms are independent of OS definition or model. An earlier section of this study has listed them and here the list is developed and discussed under the following headings: design characteristics, sample characteristics, data issues and generalisability.

### **Design characteristics**

Bauer et al (1998) provide in their literature review an appendix summarising the major design characteristics of published OS studies conducted between 1986 and the start of 1997. This review has considered a further five studies (Ashforth, Saks and Lee 1997, 1998; Holton and Russell 1997; Anakwe and Greenhaus 1999; Klein and Weaver 2000). Of this total of seventy-one studies, fifty-seven were longitudinal (others were cross-sectional, with one experimental). Table 8 below summarises the designs of the longitudinal studies.

**TABLE 8: DESIGNS OF LONGITUDINAL STUDIES**

Time points	Method	Self-report	Self report + supervisor report
x 2	Interview + survey		1
x 2	Survey	16	8
x 2	Interview	1	
x 3	Survey	15	9
x4	Survey	1	
x6	Survey	6	

Looking at the table, it is startling that only two of the fifty-seven studies involved anything more than surveys. This focus on quantitative study confirms the need for survey techniques to be complemented with detailed qualitative case studies (Ferner 1994; Becker and Gerhart 1996) or structured observation (Ashforth and Mael 1989), together with consideration of contextual factors (Ashforth, Saks and Lee 1998).

OS reviewers comment on the fact that most research designs are survey based over time-frames which have been described as 'arbitrary' (Ashforth, Saks and Lee 1998:907). Thus there have been recommendations that future research studies give greater attention to the issue of refining and validating timescales (Bauer et al 1998; Saks and Ashforth 1997).

### **Sample characteristics**

There have been many calls for a more diverse sample of newcomers from a greater variety of occupations (Preston 1993; Ostroff and Kozlowski 1994; Holton 1996; Saks and Ashforth 1997; Ashforth, Saks, Lee 1998;). This is not a surprising call. A closer examination of the survey respondents indicates that twenty-eight of the studies surveyed US college graduates or MBA graduates entering their first job, and a further thirteen surveyed US accountants and engineers entering their first job.

The studies in the literature reviewed are concentrated on newcomers entering managerial roles in predominantly white-collar industries. There is very little research on non-managerial newcomers or in blue-collar industries.

Although issues around age range, diversity and organisational entry point are not covered specifically in the literature reviewed, it is reasonable to assume that organisational socialisation experiences for other types of older (or younger) entrants to the workforce differ from the experience of those typically surveyed in OS studies.

Also notable is the almost exclusive focus on first job newcomers (i.e. entry to the workforce). Other groups such as mid-career job changers, and people being promoted or transferred do not feature in the studies reviewed. Yet as discussed earlier there are those who argue that OS is a lifelong process pervading an individual's entire career (Chao et al 1994).

This lack of sample diversity could raise issues about the generalisability of the findings to other employee groups and to employees in countries other than those where the surveys took place.

### **Data issues**

The reliance on self-reports has been seen as a concern and a limitation amongst OS researchers. The suggestion has been made that future research should supplement self report measures with data from alternate sources such as peers, supervisors, documents, work samples and observation (Jones 1986; Wanous and Colella 1989; Allen and Meyer 1990; Ostroff and Kozlowski 1992; Ashforth and Saks 1996).

It makes intuitive sense that some form of triangulation, used to cross check the self-reports, would add to research designs. In a commercial organisation, processes such

as performance management, pay reviews, and disciplinary proceedings all draw on a range of data to provide rounded evidence on individuals. Reliance on self-report is deemed insufficient. Similarly many professional bodies now require production of a portfolio of material, drawn from the types of sources listed above, as part of admission to entry of the body. (The Institute of Management Consultancy and the Institute of Personnel and Development are both examples of this.)

### **Generalisability**

From the foregoing discussion on the research design and methodologies found in OS studies it seems plausible to suggest that there are issues around the generalisability of the findings which may mean that they are valuable only at 'the particular and peculiar' (Van Maanen 1979:216).

For a group of studies to be generalisable, a theory in which to position them needs to be evident (Glaser and Strauss 1967). It has previously been shown in this study that there is no 'theory' of OS.

### **Why socialise?**

It may be that there is no theory of OS because there appears to be nothing in the studies reviewed that agrees an answer to the question 'Why organisational socialisation?' The literature offers a range of reasons. For the organisation OS can be part of a change strategy (Feldman 1981), a social control mechanism (Pascale 1985:23; Evans and Lorange 1989; Ferner 1994), or 'an ensuring of consistency around certain crucial activities that link to a firm's strategy' (Pascale 1985:25). OS can be used to develop and sustain a culture (Rose 1997), to encourage conformity (Ashforth, Saks and Lee 1998), to ensure organisational stability and effectiveness (Schein 1968), to teach organisation specific modes of behaving and thinking (Fisher 1987) and 'to enable people to think well of the product in high quality terms, and to think of the organisation as a family where they

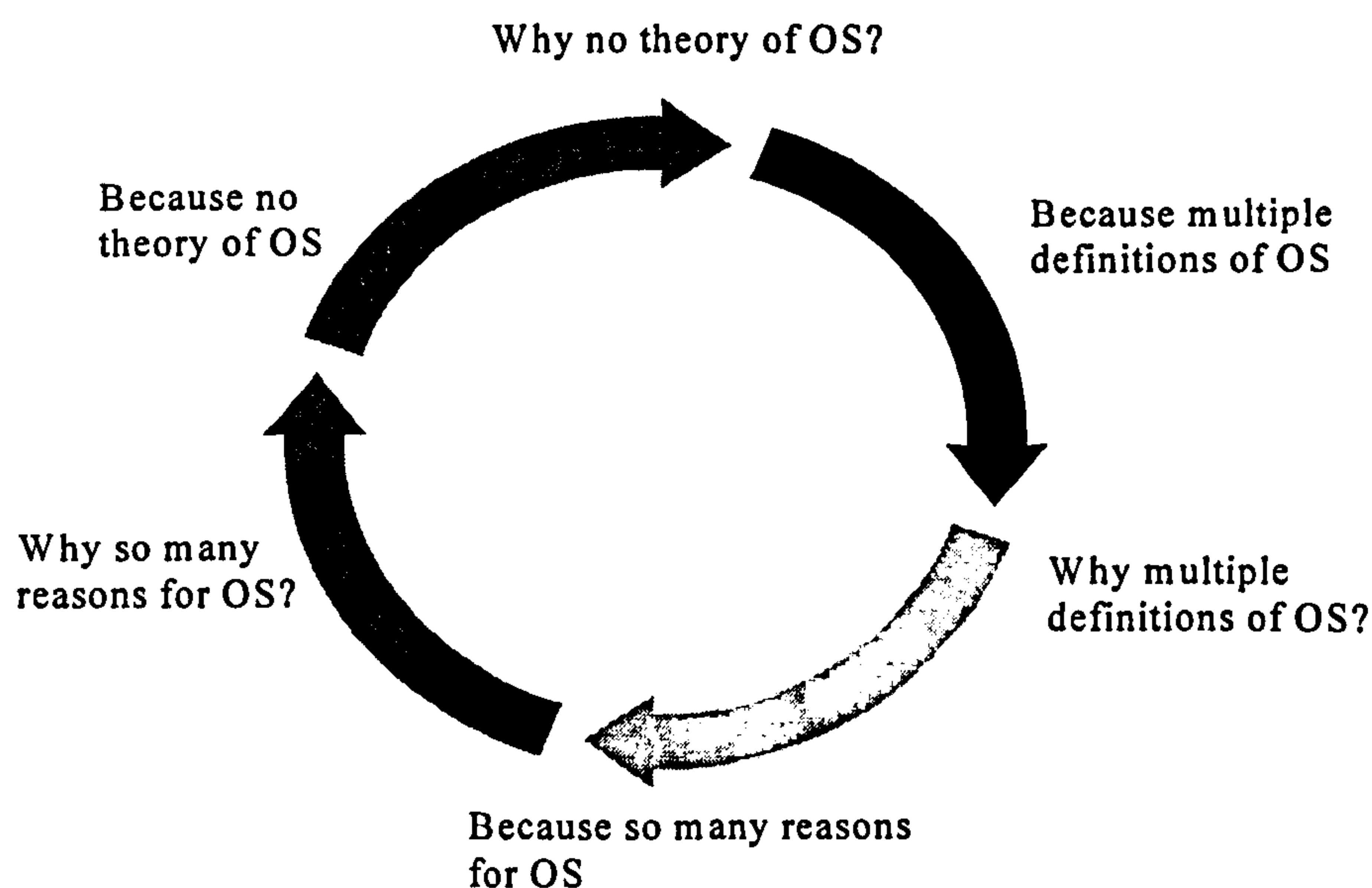


belong, are cared for, and will be fairly rewarded' (Fineman 1996). It can also be used to establish a base of attitudes, habits and values that foster co-operation, integrity and communication (Pascale 1985) and to invest in an individual so that their knowledge and what they pick up can be used to organisational advantage.

From the individual's point of view OS can engender a sense of competence in the task and role and a sense of acceptance into the workgroup and organisation (Miller and Jablin 1991). OS can also facilitate adjustment to the work group's norms and values (Feldman 1981), and promote the building of a situational definition (Ashforth and Mael 1989). Noticeable as lacking in the range of reasons are any from the perspectives of the workgroup or other stakeholders.

As well as numerous answers to the question 'Why OS?' there are, as previously discussed, multiple definitions of OS. The 'why' and 'because' of these three factors - lack of theory, multiple definitions and assorted reasons for OS - seem to follow each other in a continuous circle. Figure 1 attempts to illustrate this cycle. It is not too wild a leap to surmise that there may be issues with generalisability, because there is no consistent platform (at the theory level) from which to generalise.

**FIGURE 1: THE CYCLE OF THEORETICAL CONFUSION IN OS**



## **Summary**

This section has outlined some of the methodological issues to be found in the OS literature: specifically the design and sample characteristics, and some data and generalisability issues.

## **Results and findings of previous studies**

Given that theory is fragmented and that definitions and purpose of OS are multiple, it is not surprising that the outcomes of OS reported in the literature are numerous and measures of effectiveness hard to find. The following section discusses these aspects of OS. First the results of the various studies reviewed are discussed and second issues concerning the measures of effectiveness of OS are presented.

### **Results of previous studies**

A review of the literature reveals that the results of the studies are individually specific but generally inconclusive, although some common ground can be discerned. Broadly, results fall into one of four categories (which, as shown in Table 4, are virtually the same as the categories BA was interested in exploring). These are what newcomers are learning, the types of socialisation interventions, the role of others and the impact of the newcomers themselves. These four categories are discussed in the following sections.

### **What newcomers are learning**

As discussed earlier, definitions of OS focus on the theme that newcomers need to learn the culture of the organisation and how to behave in it, while content models of OS suggest specific domains of learning.

Because each study appears to be 'particular and peculiar' (Van Maanen 1979:216) it is difficult to observe patterns of evidence on what newcomers learn, and there have been a number of recommendations for extending the research in this area.

All the studies reviewed are in agreement that whatever it is that is learned is learned primarily at a local level. That is, newcomers are learning more about their workgroup, role and role context than they are about the wider organisational activity (Van Maanen 1979; Ostroff and Kozlowski 1992; Chao et al 1994; Morgan 1997). It is evident from the studies that the 'climate of the newcomers' local work groups and their particular relationships within them overwhelms the importance of the more general conditions' (Meyerson 2001:260).

Beyond this there is little that is comparable. From the evidence it could be surmised that the statement voiced in one study - that 'relationships between the learning of specific socialisation content areas and specific job outcomes are currently unknown' (Chao et al 1994:730) - would also be a commonly agreed view. This comment endorses the recommendations of a number of studies (referenced earlier) that more research needs to be done on what is learned during socialisation.

### **Types of socialisation interventions**

It has been noted that research on socialisation interventions is very limited and that no research has examined the nature of needed interventions, or tested outcomes with varying types of interventions (Holton 1996). Nevertheless a number of the studies reviewed present results that suggest that organisations need to develop socialisation programmes at a local or sub-unit level to suit the nature of the newcomers. Further, researchers appear to reject the development of formal socialisation programmes in favour of more 'tailored' and informal interventions (Jones 1983, 1986; Ostroff and Kozlowski 1992; Preston 1993; Holton 1996; Saks and Ashforth 1997).

Given the focus in many of the studies on the role of the workgroup, it is not surprising that researchers make the point that it might be beneficial to develop socialisation

programmes which train insiders to facilitate newcomers' socialisation (Ostroff and Kozlowski 1992).

### **The role of others**

As discussed earlier the contention within the themes of OS is that newcomers are involved in learning aspects of the organisation from others. The various 'others' referred to in those themes are the newcomer's boss, experienced colleagues, co-workers and staff, the 'organisation', and some others.

Because learners appear to be learning most from and about their immediate environment, it is not surprising that the immediate boss and co-workers are identified in the results of several studies as being key in the OS process. Miller and Jablin (1991:97), for example, note that 'newcomers' information-seeking efforts are likely to be focused on their superiors and co-workers because the other sources are usually neither equally available nor helpful to new hires.' And this view is substantiated in a number of other studies. Anakwe and Greenhaus (1999:8), for example, report that 'findings from the correlation and multiple regression analyses suggest that of the three measures of socialisation tactics, experienced colleagues play the most prominent role in predicting effective socialisation.' Others producing similar results include Chatman (1989), Ashforth and Mael (1989), Ostroff and Kozlowski (1993), Carroll and Teo (1996), Saks and Ashforth (1997).

Who specifically in the immediate environment is felt to be key appears to depend on the focus and design of the study. From the literature reviewed it is reasonable to produce a working hypothesis that the immediate boss and the work group/colleagues should be viewed as equally important in terms of socialisation. However, the boss is more important in terms of creating the climate of 'safety' for the newcomer (Meyerson 2001; Schein 1993:89).



Also, from evidence in the literature, it is possible to conclude that workgroup socialisation is more important than organisational socialisation, and indeed one research study has suggested that workgroup socialisation be a field of study in its own right (Anderson and Thomas 1996). Other studies have recommended extending the research on the role of others in the socialisation of newcomers and these are referenced in the previous chapter.

### **The impact of the newcomers**

As discussed earlier, it is commonly asserted in the literature reviewed that newcomers are instrumental in their own socialisation. Where researchers differ is on what aspect of the newcomer has a bearing on the socialisation process. Jones (1983) useful, but surely not exhaustive, list includes the newcomer's biographical experience, the way he has learned respond to and deal with new situations, the way he takes the 'role of the other' to define appropriate response, the way he takes present action predicated on past assumptions as well as on future consequences, the way he perceives and responds to the context, and the effect of his prior learning experiences and sensemaking activity.

The studies reviewed tended to focus on one, or at most two of the aspects listed, not on all of them, so again it is difficult to make comparisons on the results presented.

The part played by newcomers in their own socialisation is an area in which a number of suggestions for extending the research have been put forward.

### **Measures of effectiveness of OS**

Anakwe and Greenhaus (1999:1) make the bold statement that 'no empirical study to our knowledge has examined socialisation effectiveness', and in the literature reviewed for this study none was found. Klein and Weaver (2000) suggest that one reason for this lack of research might be the absence of criteria for measuring the extent to which an

individual is socialised. Given the many calls for further research in this area as noted earlier, it is evident that there is a gap in knowledge.

Anakwe and Greenhaus’s (1999:2) definition of effective socialisation (quoted earlier and repeated here) is ‘the criteria through which the success of the organisation’s socialisation programmes and the newcomer’s success through the entire process are evaluated. It is conceptualised as the primary outcome of the socialisation process that will enhance the achievement of individual and organisational outcomes’. This definition appears to exclude more traditional and specific outcome measures such as adjustment, intention to stay or quit, motivation and whether or not expectations have been met.

Anakwe and Greenhaus’s (1992) definition could be described as something of a catch all, but in the absence of any other in the literature, it is a good enough place to start. It implies an interactionist perspective, including as it does reference to both the organisation and the newcomer. Although it omits reference to ‘workgroup’, examination of the study itself reveals that the results are discussed in relation to ‘experienced colleagues’ and ‘co-workers’, rather than in relation to the ‘organisation’.

Interestingly, the studies which report effectiveness at a generalisable level do this from the perspective of the newcomer rather than that of the workgroup or organisation, and express it either as what effective OS ‘looks like’ or what ineffective OS ‘looks like’. Table 9 below summarises:

**TABLE 9: INDICATORS OF OS EFFECTIVENESS**

Some reported indicators of newcomer OS effectiveness	Some reported indicators of newcomer OS ineffectiveness
‘Giving the new man (sic) some important responsibility or position of power’. (Schein 1968:9)	

'In comparison with less well socialised people well socialised people have greater personal incomes, are more satisfied, more involved with their careers, more adaptable, and have a better sense of their personal identity.' (Chao et al 1994:741)	Increased turnover, lower performance, dissatisfaction, negative work attitudes and stress. (Ostroff and Kozlowski 1992)
Initiation to a group (Feldman 1981:314)	The newcomer leaves the organisation demonstrating that it has not successfully transformed the outsider into a participating member (Feldman 1981)
Inclusion in the work group (Gould 1997)	Perceived mismatches between the newcomer's and the organisation's goals and values may be the impetus for organisational withdrawal (Chao et al 1994)
Newcomers have developed high quality working relationships by the end of the first year (Gabarro 1985)	The newcomer has failed to develop a set of shared common expectations with key subordinates or their bosses (Gabarro 1985)
Newcomers have developed networks of influence (Bauer, Morrison and Callister 1998)	
'Newcomers become insiders when-and as they are given broad responsibilities and autonomy, entrusted with privileged information, included in informal networks, encouraged to represent the organisation, and sought out for advice and counsel by others.' (Louis 1980:849)	

It is not surprising, given the fragmentation of the theory, the number of definitions of OS, and the lack of clarity on the question 'Why OS?', that there is a correspondingly broad range of indicators of effective socialisation.

Because of the lack of critical evaluation and substantive discussion of OS effectiveness in the literature it may be appropriate here to highlight three gaps identified in the few discussions of OS effectiveness that are contained in the literature reviewed. First, and as already noted, some researchers reject the notion that socialisation is a process which is time-bound, taking the view that it is a lifelong, ongoing process that is as important for established organisational members as it is for newcomers. It follows from this argument that individuals are in a constant state of being socialised, so that 'effective socialisation' is not an end in itself but a continuous rebalancing and realigning to changing situations. (In popular management and organisational mythology there are examples of individuals

who have had spectacular falls even though they might have been considered effectively socialised at some point in their career with a particular organisation: Gerald Ratner is a case in point).

Second, it is striking that work performance is not specifically mentioned as an indicator of successful OS given that one of the expectations, at least of commercial organisations, is that people are there to get work done effectively. From a line manager's perspective it is not enough for someone to fit in with the workgroup in a social sense. He has to be able to deliver the work required.

Third, and developing this idea, it may be that effective socialisation (fitting in) is not a necessary condition for getting on (here defined as effective performance). Or it may be that it is only necessary to fit in with specific stakeholder groups, possibly those who have the most power and influence over an individual's career prospects. The story of Richard Greenbury, the Marks and Spencer's 'lifer' who also fell from grace, suggests both these possibilities as the extract below illustrates:

It was evident to anyone who met him within the company that Greenbury was on the way up. ... Unlike those beneath him he was not afraid of taking on his superiors. While Greenbury thrived on conflict most of his colleagues backed off. Because he was more focused and more competitive than his peers he moved swiftly through the ranks. ... But for the average M and S manager Greenbury was already a fearsome character. (Bevan 2001:93)

This section has presented some of the results of the OS literature reviewed discussing them in one of four categories. It has discussed the range of effectiveness measures generated in the literature and possible reasons why there are so many. Following this, three gaps were identified in the discussion of OS effectiveness existing in the literature.



The next section summarises some of issues presented in this section and in preceding sections in order to draw conclusions and to point a way forward.

## **Summary**

There is a significant body of work on OS. Although it has been described as fragmented and lacking a unifying theory, it presents some fairly consistent themes that may ultimately cohere into a consistent way of thinking (if not a theory). Appearing in all the research in various guises are the four themes already presented and discussed in earlier sections. First, newcomers need to learn 'the way we do things round here', and they appear to do it interactively. A proactive style appears to work best. Second, the learning process is time related, with some researchers considering it time-bound and others considering it lifelong. Third, newcomers are involved in learning from others, apparently those with whom they are in closest organisational contact, that is boss, co-workers and workgroup. Finally, newcomers' attributes and personalities impact on the socialisation process and it appears that they need to 'pay the price of membership' in order to become fully effective in their new role.

From the many directions that OS has taken, four fundamental questions emerge related to these themes, together with one additional question:

1. What and how are newcomers learning in order to get to grips with the new organisation?
2. What is the relationship (if any) between fitting in, getting on and time?
3. Which experienced organisational members are most influential in the OS process?
4. What part does the newcomer play in his OS?
5. What does effective OS 'look like'?

One reason why these fundamental questions emerge, and remain largely unanswered, might be that OS studies to date have tended to tackle aspects of each question independently of the other questions. It may be more fruitful to view the questions as a

holistic, interdependent and synergistic set: an approach implied by Feldman (1981:15). He suggests 'thinking about organisation socialisation as a set of multiple simultaneous processes with a range of outcomes'. This, in his view would 'clarify the theoretical and empirical research in the area.'

One result of this lack of answers is that there is little specific direction in the literature for those seeking practical direction. So, for example, by reading the OS literature BA is unlikely to solve the issues identified around the fitting in and getting on of its SLJs.

One way forward then is to take the five questions and aim to answer them, first, in a way that will provide practical direction to organisations and, second, in a way that contributes to developing theoretical OS thinking. However, given the breadth and scope of the OS literature, it would be impractical to attempt this across the whole canvas.

A more realistic way forward is to identify where, within OS thinking, the questions can be addressed in order to achieve the two aims. The following chapter returns to the tactics model of OS. It then identifies the investiture/divestiture tactic as the starting point, explains why this is an appropriate place to start and presents the main research question and subquestions.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

This chapter returns to the tactics model of OS and discusses the investiture/divestiture tactic, together with some of the issues surrounding it. Some reasons for the issues are suggested. Following this links are made from the tactic to the four questions previously identified. These are then narrowed to the main research question and sub-questions.

### **Return to the tactics model**

The literature reviewed described five types of OS models one of which was the tactics model. Developed by Van Maanen and Schein (1979) this is the most accepted framework for understanding the OS process. They identified six major tactical dimensions of OS, and used the phrase the 'tactics of OS' to refer 'to the ways in which the experiences of individuals in transition from one role to another are structured for them by others in the organisation' (Van Maanen and Schein 1979:230).

Their six-tactic typology considers each of the six tactics as a bipolar continuum. They discussed the tactics in relation to role orientation, and proposed that newcomers respond to their roles differently because the socialisation tactics used by organisations shape the information newcomers receive (Jones 1986:263).

Table 6 presenting the tactics has been previously discussed, but for ease of reading it is re-presented here:

**TABLE 10: VAN MAANEN AND SCHEIN (1979); THE TACTICS OF OS**

<b>Tactic</b>	<b>Terms defined</b>
Collective versus individual	Collective being the way a group of newcomers are taken through a common set of experiences eg a graduate intake to an organisation. Individual being the process of introducing new recruits singly and with no common process to the organisation.
Formal versus informal	Formal being the way newcomers are segregated from others in the workforce while undergoing basic training. Informal being the opposite: where no special distinction is drawn between the newcomers and the rest of the workforce.
Sequential versus random	Sequential being the method of prescribing steps in a newcomer's experience: typically a graduate cohort will experience the organisation in a particular sequence. Random being the opposite: no prescribed order or sequence and possibly quite ad hoc.
Fixed versus variable	Fixed being the time taken to work through the steps of the process. The newcomer knows the timetable of events. Variable being not time-bound. (The newcomer may have no idea when the socialisation process is finished.)
Serial versus disjunctive	Serial being the grooming of newcomers by insiders holding a similar role. Disjunctive being the process of a newcomer finding out for himself without the benefit of any role models.
Investiture versus divestiture	Investiture being the ratification and endorsement of the characteristics the newcomer brings to the organisation. Divestiture being the extent to which a newcomer is stripped of his identity in order to rebuild it in the model required by the organisation. (As in people becoming IBMers for example.)

Jones (1986), building on Van Maanen and Schein's work, argued that the six tactics - collective, formal, sequential, fixed, serial and investiture - formed a cluster. He called this institutionalised socialisation. According to Jones these tactics 'encourage newcomers to accept established roles, thereby reinforcing the status quo' (Ashforth, Saks and Lee 1997:201). In contrast, at the opposite end of the continuum the individual, informal, random, variable, disjunctive and divestiture tactics encourage newcomers to examine and challenge the status quo, and to develop their own approaches to their roles. This cluster Jones called individualised socialisation. He also argued that the six tactics 'pair' into 3 sets. Table 11 below illustrates this:



**TABLE 11: CLUSTERED SOCIALISATION TACTICS**

Institutionalised socialisation	Individualised socialisation	Tactic concerned with:
Collective Formal	Individual Informal	) Context )
Sequential Fixed	Random Variable	) Content )
Serial Investiture	Disjunctive Divestiture	) Social )

Jones (1986) operationally defined the six tactics as six five-item scales, endowing questions with an active/behavioural, rather than an affective/evaluative, tone (in order to reduce common method variance). The questions were scored on a seven-point self-report scale ranging from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree' based on a Likert-type format. Ashforth, Saks and Lee (1997) note that these scales were used in all but two of the ten survey studies of the Van Maanen and Schein model undertaken to that date. Table 12 below provides an example of the questions used in operationalising the collective v individualised tactic:

**TABLE 12: EXAMPLE QUESTIONS**

<b>Collective v individual tactic</b>
Other newcomers have been instrumental in helping me understand my job requirements
This organisation puts all newcomers through the same set of learning experiences.

On two of the tactics, fixed/variable and investiture/divestiture, Van Maanen and Schein (1979) took a contrary view to Jones. They argued that the fixed and investiture tactics should predict an innovative, challenging role orientation. Their study suggested that a set timetable for assumption of the role provides newcomers with the security they need to challenge the status quo, and investiture allows newcomers to retain their individuality thereby facilitating development of their own approaches to the role.

## **The investiture/divestiture tactic**

Investiture/divestiture encompasses a concept towards which all the various OS definitions point, i.e. in being concerned with the organisational socialisation of newcomers, and thus making the link between the individual and the organisation explicit. However, the tactic has been troublesome in relation to the other tactics in several of the studies reviewed. For example Jones's (1986:270) results show that investiture/divestiture has the smallest degree of inter-correlation with the other tactics; West, Nicholson, Rees (1987) mention all six tactics but draw inferences only on five (they exclude discussion of investiture/divestiture); and Allan and Meyer's (1990) results show that the correlation involving the fixed/variable and investiture/divestiture dimensions was consistent with Jones's predictions, but not with Van Maanen and Schein's.

Similarly, Ashforth and Saks (1996:170) doing canonical correlation analyses revealed that the tactics reflecting individualised socialisation (with one tactic, investiture, loading in a manner opposite to that predicted by Jones) were positively associated with performance at both four months and ten months; and Ashforth, Saks and Lee (1997:203) noted in reference to another study, 'However, Baker (1989) and Black (1992) found that investiture was only weakly associated with the other tactics'.

Finally, Ashforth, Saks and Lee (1998:915) state that, because the parameter estimate for investiture as a socialisation tactic in their study was not significant ( $t < 2$ ), investiture was omitted from the socialisation factor.

## **Reasons for issues arising**

The fact that this tactic is apparently more problematic than the others in terms of results may be due to one or more of a number of stated or inferable reasons. For example,

looking at Table 10 above it is worth noting that, with the exception of divestiture, the individualised tactics are 'defined primarily by what they are not. They do not involve grouping newcomers and subjecting them to a common set of experiences. They do not involve a well-defined series of stages that unfold to a set timetable. And they do not involve the use of a mentor role model'. Indeed individualised socialisation 'may occur more by default than by design' (Ashforth and Saks 1996:151). Thus in comparison with the other tactics investiture/divestiture is being studied from a positive rather than a negative perspective. Van Maanen and Schein's definition of the tactic differs from that of Jones's as Table 13 below illustrates:

**TABLE 13: DEFINITIONS OF THE INVESTITURE/DIVESTITURE TACTIC**

<b>Author</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Proposition</b>
Van Maanen and Schein (1979)	Investiture defined as 'the degree to which a socialisation process is constructed to either confirm or disconfirm the entering identity of the recruit'	<p>Divestiture processes are most likely to lead to a custodial orientation. Investiture processes are most likely to lead to an innovative orientation. (Taking a 'custodial orientation' is defined as assuming a 'caretaker' stance towards the knowledge, strategies, and missions associated with the role. The newcomer does not question but accepts the status quo. Taking an 'innovative orientation' is defined as seeking actively to alter the 'knowledge base, strategic practices, or historically established ends of a particular role' (Van Maanen and Schein 1979:229).</p> <p>Custodial responses result from a socialisation process involving divestiture.</p>
Jones (1986:265)	Investiture defined as 'the degree to which newcomers receive positive or negative social support after entry from experienced organisational members'.	<p>Divestiture may not cause newcomers to adopt passive or custodial role orientations. Divestiture may lead individuals to question definitions of situations offered by others and stimulate innovative orientations to roles.</p> <p>Socialisation practices involving divestiture will produce innovative role orientations.</p>

Because one appears more focused on identity and the other on social support it may be that studies are 'confused' about which aspect they are primarily discussing, despite the fact that, as noted, most studies used Jones's scales. It is evident that the two key studies (Van Maanen and Schein's 1976 and Jones's 1996) are mutually inconclusive. There is no answer in their studies to the question – 'Is one or other correct?' It may be that they are indeed truly conflicting. To address this issue Ashforth and Saks (1996:172) developed a new measure of investiture that in their view more accurately captures Van Maanen and Schein's original conception. They found that investiture was uncorrelated with role innovation, but positively correlated with performance. So, in a sense, their (1996) study does not resolve the question: it neither supports nor rejects the disagreement. The case points towards a positive analysis (assuming performance has some linkage with role innovation), but a critical examination of Ashforth and Saks's (1996) research results in alternative explanations or ambiguities.

It may be that the impact of the investiture/divestiture tactic on performance depends on the nature and size of the sample studied (Ashforth and Saks 1996:155). Another possibility was considered by Evans and Lorange (1989:251). They suggested that 'the degree to which the process is one of divestiture or investiture to a recruit is, in part, a function of the recruit's entering characteristics and orientation toward the role'.

Anakwe and Greenhaus (1999) make the point that the reliability of Jones's (1986) measures of socialisation tactics has been problematic.

A reason not mentioned in the literature, but from practical observation likely to be just as valid as the reasons identified, is that investiture/divestiture is not a cohesive 'activity'. It cannot be readily identified or measured. It is much more complex, contingent and subtle than the literature suggests. For any one individual it is likely that various aspects of identity will be confirmed (or disconfirmed) by various stakeholders. So, for example, the



boss may like the fact that an individual has a challenging style, but the individual's team members may interpret this as a form of bullying and resist it. Thus the individual is being both confirmed and disconfirmed by stakeholders in his success because the perceptions of style are different. Additionally the perceptions may not be fixed but dynamic: dependent on a range of factors including context and time.

Previous researchers have analysed the tactic as one complete set, i.e. as 'the tactic'. They have not treated each of Jones's five questions as a separate item for analysis. As each item is concerned with a different concept it may be that treating the group as a set oversimplifies the results. It may be more appropriate to unpick the tactic and analyse each item in relation to every other item within that set.

### **Way forward on investiture/divestiture**

Five studies have examined the tactics model and included specific discussion on the investiture/divestiture tactic: Jones (1986), Allen and Meyer (1990), Ashforth and Saks (1996), Ashforth, Saks and Lee (1997), Anakwe and Greenhaus (1999). These studies have a number of things in common.

First, all were quantitative. None included qualitative, interpretative techniques 'which seek to describe, decode, translate and otherwise come to terms with the meaning not the frequency, of certain more or less naturally occurring phenomena in the social world' (Van Maanen 1983 quoted in Easterby et al 1997:71).

Then all were conducted on 'new to workforce' joiners, in fact business school graduates, all were mailed surveys to a relatively large sample (more than 100), all used Jones's six tactic x five-scale items (one in modified format), all analysed the five scale items as a single, collapsed set to reflect one tactic, and all considered all six tactics i.e. they did not

look at any one tactic as distinct and standalone. Finally, all were conducted on the US workforce.

Recognising the methodological issues surrounding this approach a range of suggestions has been made for further research on 'the nuances of investiture and its measurement' (Ashforth and Saks 1996:172). Ashforth, Saks and Lee (1997:212) suggest that additional scale items be written, perhaps by slicing the content domain of the tactic into finer pieces. Ashforth and Saks (1996:153) suggest that the focus should turn from changes in the way a newcomer performs a role to changes to the newcomer as a person. (Ashforth and Saks 1996:170) suggest that future research should assess further the relationship between this tactic and socialisation and performance in other samples. And Anakwe and Greenhaus (1999) suggest the need for further development of the investiture/divestiture scale used by Jones (1986) to measure socialisation tactics.

It is interesting that the scale used in the Ashforth and Saks (1996) work was not analysed on an item by item basis either, but was collapsed into two sets (one set Jones's and the other the new set) and analysed in relation to the other tactics. Thus, as implied above, it may yield richer information if, within the investiture/divestiture tactic, the questions were analysed individually in relation to each other and not in relation to the other tactics.

(In response to an e-mail enquiry on 27 January 1999 from this researcher on whether the investiture/divestiture tactic could be considered in isolation, the previous researcher, Blake Ashforth, said. 'Of the six tactics, investiture has the weakest pattern of correlation with the other tactics. And so, if your focus is on investiture, there are strong grounds for arguing that it does stand alone as a distinctive and independent tactic.'))

These suggestions are considered further in Chapter Five on research design. The following section considers investiture/divestiture in relation to the fundamental but unanswered OS questions.

### **Investiture/divestiture and wider questions**

The literature review concluded that five fundamental questions related to OS remain unanswered:

1. What and how are newcomers learning in order to get to grips with the new organisation?
2. What is the relationship between fitting in/getting on and time?
3. Which experienced organisational members play the most part in the OS process?
4. What part does the newcomer play in his OS?
5. What does effective OS 'look like'?

This suggests that a way forward would be to identify where, within OS thinking, the questions can be addressed in a way which first achieves the aims of providing practical help to an organisation seeking answers to the questions, and second contributes to developing theoretical OS thinking.

So far in this study evidence has been presented to support a number of assertions. First, that the investiture/divestiture tactic is concerned with social support/confirmation of identity and its relationship to role orientation (custodial or innovative). This relates to the questions 'What experienced organisational members are most involved in the OS process?' and 'What and how are newcomers learning in order to get to grips with the new organisation?'

Second, it has been shown that the tactic requires further research, specifically connected to performance. This relates to the question 'What does effective socialisation look like?'

(In the next section it will be argued that for a commercial organisation 'effective socialisation ' looks like 'good work performance'.)

Third, discussed is the view that the focus of research should change from one on role orientation to one on the person changes that occur. This relates to the question 'What part does a newcomer play in his socialisation?' And finally it has been noted that there is a need for more effective measures of the investiture/divestiture tactic (and the other tactics). This links to the question 'What is the relationship between fitting in/getting on and time?' The next section concludes that these relationships and linkages give rise to the research questions.

### **The final research questions**

A number of potential research questions arose from the BA work. How do SLJs get to grips with learning the ways to fit in and get on? Why are some people quicker at it than others? Who is key to helping them fit in and get on? How do they (SLJs) help themselves?

It was felt that if these questions could be answered in a practical way the organisation would have come close to addressing its issues around SLJs' fitting in and getting on. Investigation and interrogation of the various OS theories yielded the conclusion that five fundamental questions are not yet answerable. These have already been stated but it is work re-stating them here. What and how are newcomers learning in order to get to grips with the new organisation? What is the relationship (if any) between fitting in/getting on and time? Which experienced organisational members are most influential in the OS process? What role does the newcomer play in his OS? What does effective OS 'look like'?



A comparison of the two sets of questions shows that they are virtually identical. The sole difference is that BA did not question what effective OS looked like, but took it as read that effective OS meant effective work performance, i.e. people getting the job done without ruffling feathers. The organisational measurement for this was the performance management system which rated performance as 'not met', 'met', 'well met' or 'exceed'. (Appendix 2 details these ratings).

From the related issues and evidence came the linkage between the investiture/divestiture tactic and the five unanswered OS questions.

On this evidence it was proposed that a closer examination of the investiture/divestiture tactic would be likely to achieve the two aims of providing practical help to an organisation and developing theoretical OS thinking. The proposal was not to examine the tactic as a single 'thing', but to examine its component parts as represented by the individual questions developed by Jones (1986) and Ashforth and Saks (1996).

It was proposed to begin with Ashforth and Saks's (1996:156) already tested hypothesis that 'The investiture tactic will be positively associated with performance', on the basis that this was very close thematically to the questions and issues related to fitting in and getting on which were proposed for research. In testing the hypothesis Ashforth and Saks (1996) found a positive relationship between the two elements. In their discussion they note that whether a given tactic results in high or low performance depends on what is learned, but they did not explore this point in any depth.

This study takes Ashforth and Saks's (1996) hypothesis and extends it to become the research question 'To what extent are the investiture tactic (fitting in) and performance (getting on) related?' To get a close fit between the previous research and this research it was proposed to use the same questionnaire items that the previous studies

had used in order to test the investiture/divestiture tactic. But whereas the previous research had collapsed the individual questions and analysed them as a group (or two groups), this study would analyse on a question-by-question basis in order to get a more detailed view of aspects of the tactic. In taking this more finely sliced approach to the investiture/divestiture tactic this study would attempt to provide clearer answers to the fundamental questions posed above. (What and how are newcomers learning in order to get to grips with the new organisation? What is the relationship (if any) between fitting in/getting on and time? Which experienced organisational members are most influential in the OS process? What role does the newcomer play in his OS? What does effective OS 'look like'?)

Further, it was proposed to take work performance as measured by BA's performance management system as the primary measure of effective OS. This approach conforms to Anakwe and Greenhaus's (1999:2) definition of effective socialisation, 'conceptualised as the primary outcome of the socialisation process that will enhance the achievement of individual and organisational outcomes'.

## **Summary**

This chapter has returned to the tactics model of OS and discussed the investiture/divestiture tactic and some of the issues surrounding it. It has linked the tactic to the organisational and theoretical questions earlier identified and presented the specific research question. The following chapter first discusses and presents a model from which to develop a research design and then explains the design in more detail.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: THE RESEARCH DESIGN**

The previous chapters have discussed a live organisational issue that needed to be addressed, explained why OS is an appropriate field for this, reviewed English language OS literature, homed in on investiture/divestiture as the capstone OS tactic and from this identified the main research question and its sub-questions.

The research question and sub-questions could doubtless be addressed from perspectives other than the investiture/divestiture tactic. But previous discussion on the tactic has provided evidence of incomplete study by others. It appears that around investiture/divestiture there is a range of associated variables which appear to influence the OS process. Rather than focus on the linear aspects of the tactic, as previous studies have, this study was designed to look at investiture/divestiture as a complex process, separating and testing individually the concepts previously treated as one.

The following sections consider the case for siting the research in a single organisation, discuss the background to the design, present an integrated and interactionist model from which to consider the research question, detail the design attributes, and discuss some of the possible shortcomings of this design.

### **Single case study**

In this instance the decision was made to focus on a single case (BA) in order to provide a bounded framework for refining the theory around the investiture/divestiture tactic. Stake (1989:237) defines this type of case study as 'instrumental', describing this as being where 'a particular case is examined to provide insight into an issue or refinement of theory'.

Within a single case it is the boundedness, which allows focus, and the framework, which enables patterns of activity and behaviour to be studied systematically over a period of time, that make it of value (Eisenhardt 1989:536).

Cresswell (1994:12) supports Eisenhardt's view that single case study enables collection of 'detailed information by using a variety of data collection procedures'. From this variety, rich description plus triangulation of method can be obtained.

In this research it was anticipated that, by taking the single case design decision, complexities in the tactic would be revealed. This proved to be so. This is partly because case studies tend to emphasise qualitative rather than quantitative research. Previous OS studies have emphasised quantitative rather than qualitative approaches. Arguments for qualitative research have been fully rehearsed in traditional academic circles (Webb 1996; Burgess 1984; Cohen and Mannion 1989; Gill and Johnson 1991). In this study the detail gained of the OS experience of SLJs within BA provided a dimension missing from other OS studies.

The appropriateness of single case study is well understood. For example, Stake (1994:236) asks 'What can be learned from the single case?' In reply he suggests that both propositional and experiential knowledge is learned, and that case study researchers assist readers in the construction of knowledge. His view is that single cases - illustrated in sufficient detail through emphasising patterns, insights, ideas, concepts and description (Miles and Huberman 1984; Walker et al 1985; Yin 1994; Gilbert et al 1993) - will enable the reader to make good comparisons. In considering 'designed comparison' he suggests that comparison is often a substitute for the case as the focus of the study.

BA is typical of many large UK service-oriented organisations, having a market brand and a reputation with the power to attract high calibre senior-level managers. The rates of



retention and turnover amongst this group within BA are comparable with other organisations (as a straw poll among both the outplacement agencies and the commercial organisations listed in Appendix 1 confirmed). Thus, in reading this single case study an academic or a manager can draw his own comparisons, and from this gain knowledge.

Yin (1994:38) proposes that a single case can be justified when it meets all the conditions to 'confirm, challenge, or extend the theory'. BA provided all the conditions needed to extend both the investiture/divestiture theory and the wider OS theory as the following sections in this chapter discuss.

## **Background to the design**

A review of the investiture/divestiture literature suggests there are four key theoretical and empirical 'conversations' going on with regard to the OS process. These may be summarised as questions about what is or needs to be learned about the organisation and its culture. Debates over the time period in which OS takes place. Discussions on who does what to whom: is OS done to the newcomer by the organisation, or is it an interactive process, and if so what are the interactions and who with? Arguments on the effect of the attributes the newcomer brings to bear on his OS.

Previous studies have tested the tactic by a 'tick box' method on a quantitative basis and appear to have formed their conversational standpoints on evidence accumulated from this approach. What is missing from the studies reviewed is the spoken voice: anecdote, story, and described personal experience.

This study was designed to look at the process of socialisation in depth rather than in breadth. It aimed to do this by drawing on observation, interpretation and assessment of the interplay between the individual, the organisation (in this case BA), and its members, and by using a wider range of methods than in previous studies. Through this it was

planned to answer more specifically the question 'to what extent does the investiture/performance relationship hold true in BA?' Does it support Ashforth and Saks's (1996) hypothesis?

Based on a study of the literature, coupled with deep contextual knowledge of the organisation, it was anticipated that Ashforth and Sak's (1996) findings would precisely predict the situation found in BA. Alternatively it might emerge that there were limitations to a direct relationship between investiture/divestiture and performance, taking the form perhaps of a series of mediating variables which would intervene and shape the process of socialisation.

Further outcomes of this design were anticipated to be answers to such questions as; to what extent is the strongly supported hypothesis that investiture is related to performance generalisable across different populations of managers? To what extent is it possible to identify a generalisable range of factors to act as a future guide to improving manager performance? To what extent is there scope for flexibility in the relationship between the new manager and the boss? Should people be effective first and then accepted or vice versa or do effectiveness and performance vary simultaneously (co-vary)? Is investiture/divestiture a linear either/or; or is it a more complex process?

In the evidently uncritical field of OS there appears to be an assumption that OS 'happens' and is a discrete and essentially linear process. It seems to be accepted as a truism that OS exists in all organisations and takes similar forms. Within the literature reviewed, there is no competing or alternative view to socialisation; for example, that people learn the ropes by different means. In the OS literature there appears only the unitary view.

So, with the aim of providing the organisation with some practical guidance and contributing to the development of OS theory, an integrated and interactionist model for considering the overall research question and the four sub-questions was developed.

The following section lists the expectations underpinning the model and then presents it before discussing the detailed design.

### **An integrated model**

This section begins by stating the expectations that underpin the model. The model itself is then presented and a description given of how it would work in an organisational setting, followed by an explanation of what the model is designed to do and how it fills some of the gaps identified by previous researchers. The section concludes by discussing how the model could provide practical support to individuals in organisations.

### **Expectations underpinning the model**

Examination of the practical SLJ issues presented in BA and the existing published OS literature suggested that a model could be developed that interactively linked the four sub-questions of this research (what and how are newcomers learning in order to get to grips with the new organisation? What is the relationship (if any) between fitting in/getting on and time? Which experienced organisational members are most influential in the OS process? What role does the newcomer play in his OS?) in a way that provided answers to the main question. ('To what extent are the investiture tactic (fitting in) and performance (getting on) related?')

The model was designed in the anticipation that as a result of the study eight expectations on which the model was based would or would not be validated. The expectations were:

1. That OS would be revealed as an interactive process with a number of 'players in the game'. On this basis the model is rooted in the interactionist perspective.

2. That it would be evident that the four questions, what and how are newcomers learning in order to get to grips with the new organisation? What is the relationship between fitting in/getting on and time? Which experienced organisational members are most influential in the OS process? What part does the newcomer play in his OS? needed to be considered inter and intra dependently: as the scenarios presented in earlier imply.
3. That in answering the fifth question, 'What does effectiveness look like?' support would be forthcoming for Anakwe and Greenhaus's (1999) view that it depends on what is used as a yardstick. This is rooted in the observation that effectiveness is neither an absolute nor a constant. In this particular case effectiveness was taken to be effective work performance as judged by BA's performance management system.
4. That it would be demonstrated that socialisation is ongoing throughout a person's career: that change and transition, whether mild or extreme, require continuous socialisation activity, but an extreme transition like a job move will result in higher socialisation activity.
5. That effectiveness measures would make it clear that optimum performance requires the newcomer to be both fitting in and getting on.
6. That the relationship between OS and performance would be found to be complex, contingent and dynamic.
7. That OS would be found to be a whole mesh of conversations by which information flow and dialogue aid (or hinder) the process of fitting in and getting on, and would therefore not be readily assessable by quantitative analysis.
8. That the investiture/divestiture tactic, when considered through the mediating variables, would provide a means by which to validate (or not) both this model and the utility of considering the tactic as distinctive and independent.

This section has listed the expectations on which the model is based. The following section presents the model itself and explains how it could operate.



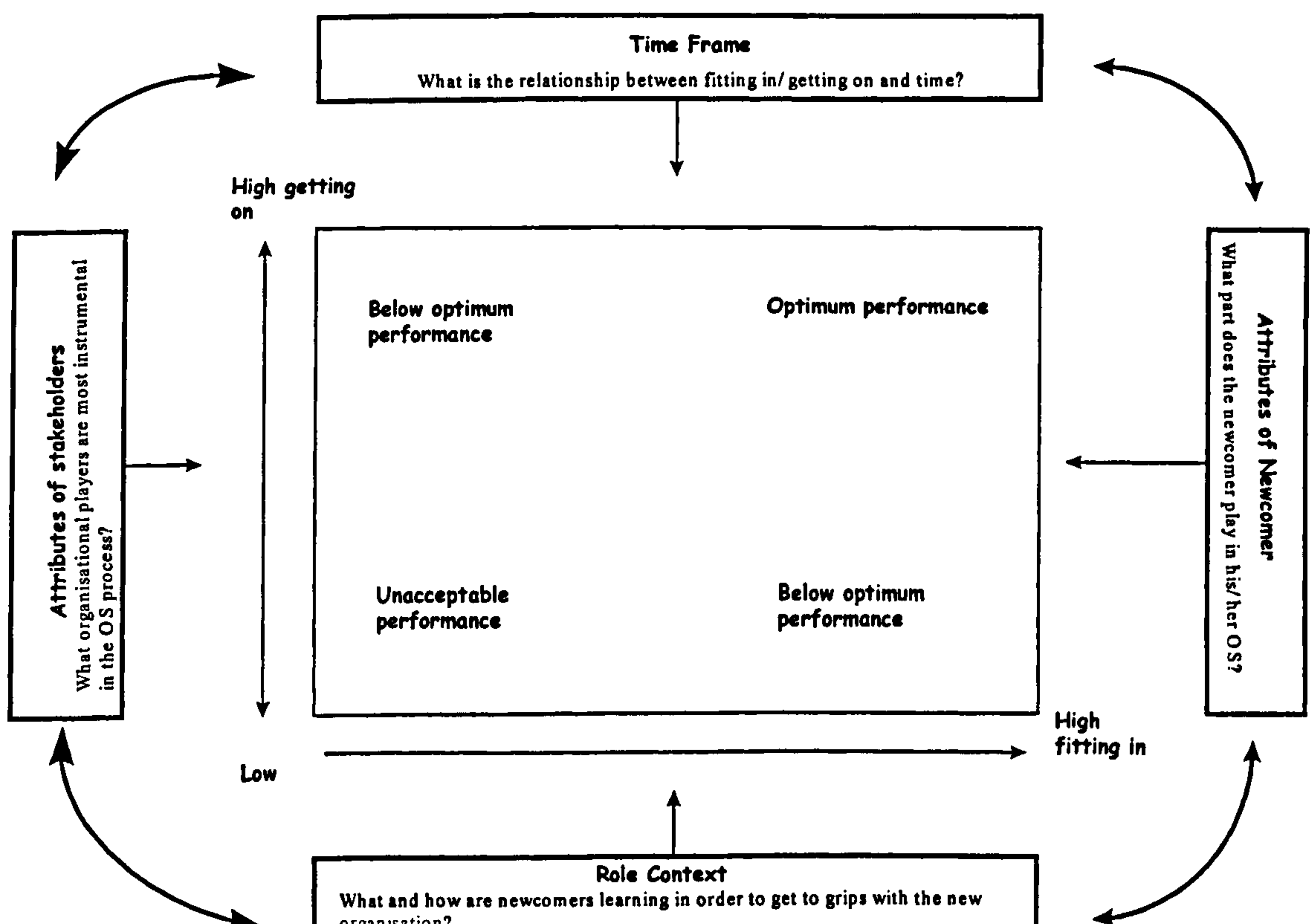
## The model

The model shows, on the outer ring (with two-way arrows), the four research questions.

The suggestion is that the role context, stakeholders, newcomer and time continuously interact each with the other resulting in various levels of input into the central performance (effectiveness) box. (For ease of presentation the model does not segment stakeholders, but the group includes the manager, subordinates, peer group and the wider organisation.)

It is postulated that newcomer performance will depend on what mix is in the box at any point and that what makes for a 'good' mix, likely to result in optimum performance, is to some degree identifiable.

**FIGURE 2: MODEL TO DETERMINE THE EXTENT OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE INVESTITURE TACTIC AND PERFORMANCE**



The following example, drawn from the researcher's observation and fieldwork, illustrates how the model works on an individual basis:

Susan Hay joins the organisation in a senior role. She is keen to do well and is proactive in building networks, developing rapport with her peer group, and finding out what she can about the organisation. The problem is that her boss is away on a secondment so she doesn't quite know what's expected of her in the job. Her performance is somewhat below that expected, even for a newcomer, although she's getting on well with her team.

***(At this point Susan would be positioned towards the bottom right of the box).***

A couple of weeks later her boss returns and clarifies with her what he expects from her in the role. She's still enthusiastic about the organisation, she's developing a network and getting on with her team. With her boss's ongoing feedback she starts to perform in her role very well. ***(At this point Susan would be moving towards the top right of the box).***

Within six months her boss has moved elsewhere in the organisation. There is a re-organisation and Susan is assigned to someone with a quite different style. She doesn't like his command and control approach and starts to withdraw. Her work performance is good as she takes pride in her work, but her boss thinks she's a bit 'bolshie' and her new colleagues think she's a bit aloof. ***(At this point Susan would be positioned towards the top left of the box).***

Susan seriously thinks of leaving of the organisation. She's getting very fed up with what she sees as her boss blocking her progress and she sees no future with the firm. She's very demotivated and her work performance starts to suffer. ***(Now she's moving down towards the bottom left of the box).***

But, out of the blue, her old boss rings her to offer a job in his bit of the organisation where he's now settled and doing well. Susan is delighted to accept and although the role isn't with her old team she does know several of the new team already. Because she is unfamiliar with some of the technical content in the new role Susan attends a three-day

training course. Within a few weeks she is doing an excellent job. *(She's now moved back to the top right of the box).*

### **What this model is designed to do**

In 'telling the story' of the model it is possible to see that it has the potential to be used in an organisation in a number of ways. Its main strength from a theoretical stance lies in the possibility it offers of considering the investiture/divestiture tactic from an interactionist perspective, previously unconsidered. Additionally, it has the potential to fill a number of gaps identified by previous researchers and to provide practical support to individuals in organisations.

It is designed to help examine the process of socialisation through the subjective interpretation of socialised and socialiser. Application of the model permits the stories of a sample of individuals as they navigate the process of OS to be told. It allows for a case-based approach embedded in the context of the organisation. In this way it enables patterns to be recognised by seeking for similarity or variance with the sensemaking accounts of individuals. These aspects are developed below.

### **Filling gaps identified by previous researchers**

The model is designed in so that it integrates the range of OS models. Thus stage models can be considered part of the 'time' input, tactics models part of the stakeholder input, process models part of the newcomer, stakeholder and time inputs, and content models part of the role context input.

It is also designed to recognise the complexities, dynamism, conversations and interactions inherent in the OS process, with the potential for extending existing OS knowledge in several of the aspects identified by previous researchers; for example, the learning during socialisation, the role of other people in the process, the impact on the

newcomer, and the effectiveness of the process (here measured in terms of work performance). Additionally, it extends the focus beyond newcomers as the model has the potential for use in a number of organisational situations; for example, with job movers.

The model is further designed in such a way that it could be operationalised simply by quantitative (survey) methods, allowing the possibility of plotting (within the effectiveness box) people's positions in relation to the vertical 'getting on' axis and the horizontal 'fitting in' axis. This is not the main objective, however, and would only partially use the model. The main objective is to use the model as a basis for dialogue, conversation, and diagnosis for tailored interventions.

Finally the design of the model enables consideration of the investiture/divestiture tactic as a distinctive and independent tactic.

### **Providing practical support to individuals in organisations**

As previously explained, one of the aims of this study was to identify some practical ways of addressing organisational issues around SLJs. The present model has the potential to facilitate this in a number of ways. It could be used to chart not only a single newcomer's journey to socialisation at various stages (as the story illustrates), but could also be applied to a group (for example of graduate entrants) if a general view was required. It allows multiple diagnosis points for tailoring interventions at an individual and group level for either newcomers or stakeholders, and could be used as a platform for regular performance reviews reflecting the assumption that OS is ongoing and career-long.

### **Summary**

This section has considered the value the model offers in enabling the investiture/divestiture tactic to be examined as a stand-alone tactic from an interactionist perspective. It has listed some ways in which this approach has the potential to start to



fill some gaps in OS theoretical knowledge and provide practical support in an organisational setting. The following section considers the design in more detail.

### **The design attributes**

The research was designed with two aims first, to answer the questions raised in the literature and in BA as has been discussed in the previous chapters. And second to follow the recommendations for addressing some of the methodological issues identified by others OS researchers.

With these in mind the design was developed to combine aspects of case study, ethnographic and phenomenological research. It included a quantitative element (a previously used scaled item questionnaire - modified slightly), a qualitative element (the interview), self-report and manager report at two time points, a sample of 'veteran' newcomers rather than those new to workforce, a comparison of these newcomers with intraorganisation job movers, and a document analysis. As discussed previously, the research was designed to be in depth rather than breadth. Each of these attributes is discussed in the sections following the research design summary table below:

**TABLE 14: SUMMARY OF RESEARCH DESIGN**

<b>Purpose of the research</b>	To understand the extent of the relationship between the investiture/divestiture tactic and work performance. To study this from the view of SLJs compared with senior level job movers.
<b>Research site</b>	Single case study
<b>Nature of research process</b>	Studies multiple units Unit of analysis: two groups of people and the way they inter-relate with a focus on organisational socialisation.
<b>Methods of data collection</b>	Studies individual SLJs/their bosses Compares with senior level job movers/their bosses Twenty item questionnaire (used in a previous study and slightly modified for this study) at two time points Structured interview with informants (two time points) Participant observation Some document analysis
<b>Methods of data analysis</b>	Search for themes and patterns Reflective portrayal of individual's views

<b>Communication of findings</b>	Descriptive Analytical vignettes Thematic Reflective narrative
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### **Quantitative element**

As discussed earlier, the investiture/divestiture tactic has previously been tested using Jones's five scale items, supplemented in a later study by additional questions which had 'greater fidelity to Van Maanen and Schein's (1979) definition'. (Ashforth and Saks 1996:173). The recommendation was made that subsequent studies should use both the measures.

The research question for this study is derived from the hypothesis tested in Ashforth and Saks (1996) study that 'The investiture tactic will be positively associated with performance'. For their study they used the two scales mentioned above to test the investiture tactic, together with eight questions on work performance following Smith (1982).

Their series of questions had already been used to tap into the areas of this study. So, acknowledging the Easterby-Smith et al (1996) suggestion that management research replicates known studies, it was planned to use a slightly modified version of those questions used by Ashforth and Saks (1996). (Appendix 5 shows how the original questionnaires were amended. Appendix 8 gives the questionnaires used in this particular study. Both are discussed further in the subsequent section).

### **Qualitative element**

As shown in Table 8, only two of the fifty-seven OS studies reviewed involved interviews. It was determined therefore that this study would involve interviews with participants. It was decided that the best way to conduct the interviews would be to have participants

complete the questionnaire with the researcher present and, as they completed it, talk about why they were giving each item a particular score.

Bearing in mind Easterby-Smith et al's (1996:31) injunction 'to be wary of glibly mixing methods', this approach was chosen because it was a way of getting 100% response rate to the questionnaire and of finding out how effective the questions were in getting valid information. It was anticipated that it would enable comparison between the quantitative score and the interview data (any disconnects between the numeric and the speech could be easily identified and queried) and provide a straightforward structure clearly connecting to the quantitative data. It was further anticipated that analysis of the qualitative data would add value to, or throw a different light on, the results obtained from the quantitative data.

### **Self-report and manager report at two time points**

As suggested earlier one of the methodological weaknesses of previous depth rather than breadth studies was the reliance on self-reports; thus, this study was designed to get manager reports on the newcomers as well as newcomer self-reports.

In the same way that newcomers talked to the interviewer about joining so did the managers. The managers answered the same questions as the newcomers in the same manner, i.e. questionnaires were completed, with the researcher present, managers would then talk about the rating they were giving each item. The only difference between the newcomer questionnaire and the manager questionnaire was the subject, the newcomer answering, for example, 'I have had to change my attitude to be accepted in BA', and the manager answering 'He/she has had to change his attitudes to be accepted in BA'. Both newcomers and their managers were interviewed at two time points: six

weeks after the newcomer had joined and again six months after the newcomer had joined. Interviews were one-to-one, i.e. the manager was not present when the newcomer was being interviewed. The two time points were the same as those used in previous studies and on that basis were similarly arbitrary.

### **‘Veteran’ newcomers rather than new to workforce**

One of the methodological shortcomings of previous studies was the lack of diversity of sample, most studies being conducted on new-to-workforce individuals. For this study, therefore, the decision was taken to focus on veterans - ‘newcomers entering at a senior level with a substantial amount of relevant experience’, (Reichers, Wanous and Steele 1994:19). Veterans appear to have particular difficulties in joining organisations at a senior level as the extract below illustrates:

More surprising, however, was the performance of outsiders. Outsiders replacing a chief executive who had been fired tended to improve their firm’s performance, but most of those who took over from CEOs retiring in the normal way failed miserably - even after allowing for the possibility that firms which fired their CEOs were already struggling.

The authors’ calculations provide concrete evidence of something that many directors have long suspected: in the absence of a crisis it is hard to recruit an outsider without infuriating managers who have been passed over. And without some support from the insiders the new CEO is usually a flop.

The Economist (25 October 1997)

### **Comparison of newcomers with intra-organisation job movers**

A further methodological shortcoming noted in previous studies related to sample characteristics was the lack of study of job changers within the same organisation. The present study took the same number of job movers as there were newcomers in order to make comparisons and draw some conclusions on the similarities and differences



between inter-organisational and intra-organisational newcomers to role. The job movers participated in exactly the same process as the newcomers in that they and their managers completed the questionnaire and were interviewed at two time points.

### **Document analysis**

A range of documents and reports related to senior manager joiners were studied. Report titles are listed in the bibliography. By virtue of her role the researcher had access to HR manpower data related to turnover, movement, and job performance.

### **Depth rather than breadth**

As noted (Table 8) previous studies were for the most part carried out on large numbers of individuals by mailed surveys. In this study, as has been explained the decision was taken to limit the study to one large organisation. BA was chosen as the single site specifically because it afforded the researcher ready availability of access. Additionally, working within one large and mechanistic organisation afforded the opportunity to reflect on the results of a study reported by Ashforth, Saks and Lee (1998). Their 'results suggested that institutionalised socialisation (as opposed to individualised socialisation) is likely to be seen as functional for large and mechanistic organisations, given their proclivity toward reproducing the status quo and exerting greater control over newcomers' attitudes and behaviours' (Ashforth, Saks and Lee 1998: 919).

### **Summary**

This section has presented a summary of the research design for this study, described the methodological shortcomings of previous studies, and explained how this research design aimed to address some of these. However, like other studies before it, this study too has its design limitations. These are discussed in the next section.

## **Design limitations**

The two main limitations of the present study are first that it is a single site study and second that OS is examined primarily from a cultural perspective.

### **Single site case study**

The reasons for the design choice have been explained earlier in this chapter so they will not be represented here. In fact siting the research in a single organisation (BA) to which the researcher belonged could be viewed as a design weakness. However, Yin (1994:103) describes two broad categories of analytical strategy in case study work: relying on theoretical propositions and developing a case description. This research followed the 'theoretical propositions that led to the case study' and for this reason the single site seemed appropriate.

### **The cultural perspective**

As Albert Einstein once noted, it is the theory through which we observe a situation that decides what we can observe. Morgan (1997) discusses eight images of organisation of which culture is only one. Making the decision to observe OS essentially through the lens of culture has the likely result of the design being blind to other ways of viewing OS (for example, from the perspective of any one of Morgan's seven other images). Thus there is a caveat attached to this study: that it is 'based on implicit images or metaphors that persuade us to see, understand, and imagine situations in partial ways' (Morgan 1997:348), in this case the cultural way.

Viewing the world through the cultural lens is the focus of ethnographic research techniques, which come from the 'anthropological tradition of illuminating patterns of culture through long term immersion in the field, collecting data primarily by participant observation and interviews'. (Glesne 1999:9) In siting the study in one organisation (and

in which the researcher was already an employee), with a specific level of individuals (senior managers) and with some data issues the study is close to ethnography, and could be viewed as coming from this tradition, which although partial, is nevertheless respected.

Even so, it might be that the lens is focused in a way that limits generalisability. However, the view was taken that a person 'May learn a great deal of the general from studying the specific, whereas it is impossible to know the specific by studying the general' (Rawlings 1942:359, quoted in Glesne, 1999:153). With this in mind, it was anticipated that, although this study is specific, it would enable better understanding of the organisation's issues in relation to the research questions. Additionally it would develop understanding in relation to similar cases (large and mechanistic organisations). This view was to some extent supported by the fact that other commercial companies consulted (see Appendix 1) felt that the study outcomes were likely to be useful.

The following sections discuss the organisation, the researcher involvement, the individuals, and some data issues from the perspective of how the specific might help illuminate the general.

### **The organisation: British Airways**

The study was carried out in BA. BA is the world's biggest international airline, transporting more passengers from one country to another than any of its competitors. Describing it in terms of facts and figures gives some impression of the airline, but does not give any 'feel' of what it is like to work for it. Describing it in terms of culture and working style might help to paint a picture for a potential new joiner, but gives little impression of the sight, sound, colour, touch, and smell of the organisation.

However, both descriptions, facts and culture, can be viewed as elements of a stage set on which to position the players. On this basis, the following section first gives some facts about the airline and second describes the organisation as the results of a cultural inventory described it. Note that this section describes the period April 1999 – October 2001, during which the study took place. Conditions now (January 2002) in BA are radically different following the attack on the World Trade Center on 11 September 2001.

### **Facts and figures**

The worldwide route network covers 268 destinations in 97 countries, with two main operating bases at London's two principal airports, Heathrow and Gatwick. BA is a co-founder of the oneworld alliance now comprising American Airlines, Cathay Pacific, Finnair, LAN Chile, Iberia and Qantas. In addition British Airways has subsidiary companies and franchise partners.

The table below gives key group statistics:

**TABLE 15: BRITISH AIRWAYS FIGURES**

Measure	1999 – 00	2000 - 01	Change
Turnover (\$m)	8,940	9,278	Up 3.7%
Employees	65,157	62,175	Down 4.6%
Number of shareholders	264,191	265,107	Up 0.3%
Passengers (000)	46,578	44,462	Down 4.5%
Cargo (000 tonnes)	897	914	Up 1.8%
Overall load factor (%)	66.6	67.4	Up 1.2 points
Revenue Tonne Kilometres	17,215	16,987	Down 1.3%
Revenue Passenger Kilometres	127,425	123,197	Down 3.3%



The downward trend shown by the figures in terms of employees, passengers and revenue is a response to the highly competitive world aviation market. There are four main elements to BA's response to these challenging conditions:

1. Continuing pursuit of cost efficiencies
2. Reduction of aircraft size (to reduce exposure to low yield connecting traffic)
3. Heavy investment in new products and continued improvement in customer service
4. Strengthening of the network through alliances

As far as possible the changes are being managed in ways that preserve the benefits of BA's existing network, but which still achieve the aim of downsizing capacity by 12% over the period to 2004.

Of the 62,000 (1% senior managers) employees, 49,000 are based in the UK and the remainder overseas. BA has employees in approximately 100 countries worldwide. On average, recruitment runs at 3,000 new entrants to the company each year. (Senior managers are 1% of these). The average length of service for male employees is 14 years and for women 9 years. The turnover rate is about 4% per annum.

Current figures show that women make up 45% of the total workforce, and 12% of its employees are drawn from ethnic minorities. 0.2% of all staff and 0.3% of BA managers are recorded as having declared a disability. (None of these is in the senior management population).

Commenting on the results for 2000 – 2001, Rod Eddington (Chief Executive) said: 'The economic slowdown and complexities created by implementing the strategy further, and particularly the fleet challenges, mean there are significant challenges for everybody in the year ahead.' (BA News, 19 July 2001).

Culture

In December 1998 and December 1999 a group of BA general managers and directors were asked to attend a workshop and complete an inventory (the Verax, Human Synergistics, Organisation Culture Inventory). The aim was to produce culture 'maps' of current culture compared with the desired/required culture in which to deliver the downsizing strategy. The 1999 maps are reproduced in Appendix 3. In terms of delivering the 12% reduction strategy and meeting the challenges outlined above, the group produced the view (and the map) that a quite different culture from the current culture was required. Table 16 below summarises current and desired culture characteristics:

TABLE 16: BRITISH AIRWAYS' CULTURE

Current culture characteristics	Desired culture characteristics
<p><b>Highly competitive</b> behaviour between teams and individuals within BA. Individuals aim to lift their own profile at the expense of colleagues and ultimately at the expense of the company</p> <p><b>A strong focus on positional power.</b> Participation from staff is not encouraged. Individuals are told what to do by their managers and not encouraged to question the underlying reasoning. Input is only sought in form of agreement not constructive criticism. Information is used as a tool for gaining and retaining power and therefore shared selectively in upwards as well as downwards communication. Result: things get done through informal, political channels rather than open processes and a direct approach</p> <p><b>Paying lip service</b> to behaviours, which are not rewarded in real terms (performance managed) i.e: innovation, quality of work, ethical behaviour, professional managerial behaviour</p> <p><b>Lack of encouraging behaviour.</b> Individuals don't feel valued and suffer from lack of supportive behaviour from peers and managers. The strong emphasis on competitive behaviour results in individuals putting all their efforts into their own personal progression and not into organisational achievement</p>	<p><b>Individuals put all their efforts into the company's success</b> and are fully aware of what their own contribution looks like, how it fits in with BA's strategy and how they will be rewarded for their input</p> <p><b>A culture which encourages individual innovation and excellence and constructive criticism</b> through clearly rewarding 'quality output'. A strong, innovative organisation needs strong, innovative staff at all levels! <b>Open channels of communication</b> and access to information so everyone hears the same message and works towards the same goal</p> <p><b>Individuals feel well managed and supported by their peers,</b> managers and the organisation as a whole</p> <p><b>Managers are genuinely interested in staff development</b> because their own performance is measured on excellent people management as well as on quality output <b>Consistent messages,</b> focused on quality achievement through open communication, clear goal setting, unambiguous processes</p>



<b>Blame Culture</b> <b>Agreement on the surface followed by opposition behind closed doors</b> <b>Lack of real team work, collaboration and sharing of ideas unless it fits an individual agenda</b>  <b>Low sense of achievement.</b> Individuals don't see how their own work fits into the bigger picture. They don't feel they are making a valid contribution	<b>Staff are well informed, motivated to challenge existing processes and put forward ideas in order to achieve company success knowing they will be rewarded for it</b>
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By comparing the two columns it can be deduced that BA is currently a bureaucratic, large organisation. Its aim is to implement a downsizing strategy, but it has an apparently inappropriate culture within which to do this. (It is beyond the scope of this study to consider such a 'thing' as an organisation culture, whether it can be measured by inventories such as the OCI, and whether the resulting information has any face validity).

This current culture description is applicable not only to BA. Other large and mechanistic organisations which display the stereotypical characteristics of Weber's bureaucracy (specialisation, formalisation, clear hierarchy, promotion by merit, impersonal rewards and sanctions, career tenure, separation of careers and private lives; Handy 1987) are likely to have similar issues in introducing changes. From this perspective, the BA experiences and findings are likely to be applicable in organisations with similar cultures - bureaucratic, large and mechanistic; thus the choice of site had the potential to reveal whether institutionalised socialisation (as opposed to individualised socialisation) appeared as a factor in the OS of SLJs. (In an earlier section of this study it was suggested that this would be likely to be the case in large and mechanistic organisations, 'given their proclivity toward reproducing the status quo and exerting greater control over newcomers' attitudes and behaviours.' Ashforth, Saks and Lee 1998: 919).

The likelihood that BA's findings would be applicable in other similar types of organisation added weight to the contention that study of this one site was likely to produce some

generalisable findings. As Pettigrew (1990:276) said, 'An n of one can be adequate if the treatment of the case material is sufficiently generic, or if the quality and nature of the findings are suitably unique or in other ways strong.'

Despite this, there needs to be an awareness of any contextual factors or features that make the organisation 'special' in a way that could affect generalisability.

## **The role of the researcher**

Glesne (1999:26) notes that many researchers are 'drawn to studying their own institution or agency, to doing *backyard* research'. She points out that the reasons for this are several: ease of access, value to the institution (in this case in terms of cutting the costs related to SLJs), 'known quantity' of researcher, and time saved in research. All of these were reasons for this study to be undertaken in the researcher's own organisation. Additional reasons related to the present study were the researcher's professional and personal experience, and the potential afforded to involve stakeholders in taking action to resolve the problems and issues identified.

Although backyard research is attractive, there are many reasons why it should be undertaken with caution. All researchers need to notice where their own views and experiences of the organisation might interfere with a more distanced view (Easterby-Smith et al 1996:39) and where they might be making assumptions about what 'matters' when trying to understand or explain (Easterby-Smith et al 1996:41). They should notice too how they are managing the degree of involvement with the research site (Pettigrew 1990:278), their ways of handling the ethical and political dilemmas which are likely to arise (Glesne 1999:27), and their abilities in managing the 'dangerous knowledge' they are likely to acquire (Glesne 1999:27). This becomes more critical where the researcher's career or organisational reputation could be on the line, or his own integrity compromised as a colleague and organisational member.



Additionally difficult to manage is the 'double-pull complex'. This was identified by Morsing and Vendelo (undated), who argue that a dialectical tension exists between a social science researcher and a company because two different sets of rationales for participating in the research process are held. They define these as the academic rationale and the business rationale. The academic rationale is described as characterised by 'its focus on advancement of science, often long-term perspective, and validity of scientific results'. The business rationale is characterised by an interest in 'improvement of organisational performance with an emphasis on the importance of immediate and applicable outcome'. Consequently, the researcher has to maintain a balance between the academic rationale and the business rationale, and to face two contrasting sets of expectations and demands during the research process.

The researcher was an employee in the BA HR Department, and the study was based there. Her 'day job' was not related to the informant group's recruitment, orientation, or subsequent socialisation activities. Despite this, her job role could have enabled her to influence these activities as a result of her information gathering and reflecting. (Indeed, one of the purposes of the study was to propose actions to be taken, and from this angle the study borders on action research.)

Thus the researcher had to take particular care in avoiding the pitfalls of backyard research. On this basis she consciously worked at being 'in the perspective business' as Pettigrew (1990:278) aptly describes it by maintaining 'critical subjectivity' (Easterby-Smith et al 1996:39), learning to understand the culture by studying the interaction of members of the culture (Kogh and Roos 1996:117), seeking alternative interpretations to pursue (Stake 1994:244), triangulating the key observations and bases for interpretation (Stake 1994:244) and adopting the role of anthropologist or 'cultural stranger' (Morgan 1997:129). One indication of her success at this was in her 2000 performance review

when her manager noted that she was generally 'too objective' and should be more involved. (She took this as a back-handed compliment.)

She was helped in maintaining perspective by the way that the study was positioned in the organisation. It was sponsored by the Director of Human Resources who took a direct hand in communicating to informants and staff in the HR Department the place of the research in the department's work and the explicit nature of the researcher's role. The research process chapter, which follows, discusses this aspect in more detail.

### **The individual informants**

There is a view that people are attracted to join particular organisations because, for various reasons, they feel they will 'fit' there. If it is true that people self-select, then it may be that the people who opt to join BA are not necessarily typical of other SLJs in similar types of bureaucratic organisation. This raises a number of questions. For example, is joining BA the same as joining, say, Marks and Spencer (also described as bureaucratic)?

Does BA's culture characteristics, industry sector, and market reputation pre-dispose some people to be attracted to the organisation and others to be repelled by it? Is the recruitment and selection process being applied to people who already have an interest in the organisation? (The prospect of self-selection again raises questions of generalisability, this time around the joiners). Does the fact that the group who did join in the study period lack diversity 'matter'? (The group being studied were all senior managers, professionals in their field and head office based). How likely is it that, given the low turnover and the high average length of service, SLJs who stay with BA are socialised to become 'good soldiers' rather than 'mavericks' - people who learn to maintain the current culture despite, in many instances, having been recruited to act to change it? These types of questions again give rise to issues around how much the specific can inform the general. (This is discussed in chapter 16).

## **Data issues**

The study took place over the financial year April 1999 - April 2000. The intention was to include every SLJ in the study. It was estimated, on the experience of previous years, that there would be about three SLJs per month, making a total group of 36. In the event, the year of the study was a very difficult one for BA (as described), and a strategy of downsizing, accompanied by a recruitment freeze, was announced. This started to bite around October 1999. This meant that although every SLJ was included in the study, the total recruited during the period was only seventeen people. Additionally seventeen senior manager movers were included in the study as a comparison group. As well as this group of thirty-four people their managers were also included, making a total group of sixty-eight people. This group was smaller than was intended at the outset. It nevertheless reflects organisational reality.

A number of potential data issues arose, reinforcing the view that organisational life is messy and complex. For example, some of the SLJs were the managers of other SLJs (there was not necessarily a neat reporting line of SLJ to experienced organisation member). Some managers of SLJs changed role after the first interview and before the second which meant a lack of continuity in perception of the SLJ; and some SLJs changed role after the first interview and before the second so the second interview put them in both the SLJ and the 'mover' camp.

All these realities and complexities are addressed more fully in later chapters of this thesis.

## **Summary**

This chapter has considered some of the design limitations of the study, particularly those related to single site, the role of the researcher, the informant group and some data



issues. These limitations raise some questions about the generalisability of the study, and this issue is taken up later in the thesis.

However, as knowledge of the potential limitations informed the method, it seems appropriate to describe how the study was conducted before returning to the generalisability question. Accordingly the following chapter is concerned with the research process.



# CHAPTER SIX: THE RESEARCH PROCESS

The previous chapters have:

- Considered the organisational issues giving rise to this study.
- Stated the reasons for siting the research in the field of organisational socialisation.
- Reviewed the literature in this field.
- Identified the capstone tactic of investiture/divestiture as the focus for the specific research question.
- Described the research design and some of the limitations of this.

This chapter describes the process of conducting the research. It begins with a chronology of events to orient the reader. The key elements are then discussed in the subsequent sections.

## Chronology

The table below outlines dates and events connected with the conduct of the study, together with brief mention of other relevant activity:

TABLE 17: STUDY CHRONOLOGY

Date	Event	Other activity
Jan 1999	Go-ahead for study given Pilot design	Conversations with Blake Ashforth on questionnaire he used in 1996 study
Feb 1999	Pilot set up	Positioning e-mail and lay summary circulated Target group approached
March 1999	Pilot interviews	14 SLJs + their bosses Interview transcripts validated
April 1999	Pilot outcomes reviewed	Lay summary revised Questionnaire modified HR administration and recruitment alerted

May 1999	Pilot report circulated for comment Arrangements made for each subsequent SLJ to be informed of study First interviews with study informants conducted	Interviewing continues through to final interview January 2001
July 1999	'Becoming an SM' workshop delivered (first of three requested)	Headcount freeze introduced
September 1999	First of several conversations with BA occupational psychologist re SLJs	Local outplacement activity begins in response to downsizing strategy  Major re-organisation of BA
November 1999	Initiation of improved admin processes for SLJs	Consultants commissioned to consider BA's strategy and operations Revisions to BA's succession planning processes initiated
December 1999	Initiation of mentoring scheme for SLJs	
March 2000	Conversations with Hay Consulting on their new leaders research	Bob Ayling, Chief Executive, resigns Senior management training cut significantly
April 2000	Last of SLJ cohort to participate joins	HR Department requests process for exit interviews. Exit interviews start (though not part of study)
May 2000	Presentation at RSA conference on knowledge exchange, drawing from study observations	Rod Eddington, new Chief Executive, joins
September 2000	Presentation to Warwick peer group	SLJs continuing to be interviewed though not as part of study, as they have heard about the process and find it useful and interesting
November 2000	Presentation to BA's recruitment/training functions on work to date	
December 2000	SM workshop on BA culture	
January 2001	Last interview completed  Data analysis begins	Findings discussed with a number of HR colleagues from other organisations at various networking events
February 2001	Presentation at IQPC conference on succession planning, drawing from study observations	
March 2001	Presentation to informants on findings to date	
May 2001		Rod Eddington's breakfasts with new senior managers reviewed
September 2001	Interchange presentation given. Audience members are Cabinet Office Personnel Directors who are interested in application of findings to secondees	

October 2001	Presentation to HR Department on final findings and recommended actions	
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**The pilot study**

Chapter Five discussed the design of the study and the rationale behind the various elements included in it. This section describes the method for operationalising the design, starting with the pilot study. The aims of the pilot study were: first, to validate the design in terms of gathering qualitative data using the questionnaire; second, to check the feasibility of getting manager reports as well as self reports; third, to identify any specific issues arising from questionnaire completion. As the target group consisted of SLJs, this was the group approached. It was decided not to include a comparison group in the pilot. The following sections cover the planning and positioning of the study, the sample, the questionnaire and interview, and the results.

**Planning and positioning**

The go-ahead for the study was given in January 1999. Following this, further discussions were held with staff in BA’s Human Resources Department, and a ‘lay summary’ (Glesne 1998:35) was produced to send to informants. This explained the purpose of the research, what form it took, what role informants would play and what was ‘in it’ for those who participated. Accompanying this was an e-mail giving additional information.

**The sample**

The sample consisted of fourteen senior managers who had joined BA from external organisations during 1998 together with their managers. This represented just under half the SLJ group of 35. The sample was selected to represent each of the main departments and operating areas of BA (with the exception of Customer Service and Operations, a department that fights shy of recruiting externally and had no SLJs that year).



As noted earlier in this thesis, there were five hundred and sixty BA senior managers who formed 1% of the total workforce (18% of the management population). The grading system allocated them to one of four senior manager grades: (percentages are of the senior management population), alpha (41%), beta (30.5%), gamma (17%), delta (11.5%). There were no typical job descriptions for each grade. The range of positions was so wide that there was no attempt to encapsulate, for instance, aspects typical of an alpha job in a single description. There were Hay unit ranges appropriate to each benefit category, but these were not generally promulgated.

Each new joiner and his manager were sent an e-mail as well as a lay summary inviting them to participate in the study. All the new joiners who were approached agreed to participate, and all but two of the managers did likewise. (These two were out of the country during the period of the pilot study).

The table below lists the SLJ sample group by department, age and previous sector:

**TABLE 18: SLJ PILOT GROUP PROFILE**

BA Department	Age	Previous sector
Engineering	55	Aviation
Purchasing	31	Banking
Engineering	35	Manufacturing
Finance	42	IT
Communications	41	Communications
Corporate HR	32	Consulting
Investments and Joint Ventures	30	Finance
Flight Operations	55	Aviation
Passenger Business	42	Consulting
Safety, Security and Environment	37	Manufacturing
Legal	30	Insurance
Strategy	40	Government
Marketing	32	Petrochemicals
Finance	34	Consulting

The average age of the informants was 38. All were white UK nationals and 3 were women (21%). Of this group of 14 who all joined in 1998, five (36%) have now left BA (at



October 2001). The turnover rate across the SM population for the same time period was 15% (84). It is clear that SLJs leave at more than double the rate of their peer group.

### **The questionnaire and interview**

Blake Ashforth (the researcher mentioned previously) was consulted on the use of the question set he used in his 1996 study. He provided, for this study, his question set and analysis framework. Prior to the pilot study Ashforth's sixteen questions were tried out on a group eight of BA HR staff (including two occupational psychologists with expertise in administering questionnaires and inventories). Following this, minor adjustments were made in order to personalise the questions to BA and to respond to linguistic issues, making the questions less American and more English. Appendix 5 shows the adjustments made to Ashforth's questions.

The pilot study questionnaire had twenty items and used a seven-point Likert-type scale running from 1 (disagree strongly) to 7 (agree strongly). The question content was the same for both groups (joiners and managers), but worded in either the first person (for the new joiner) or in the third person (for his boss).

Meetings with each informant were on a one-to-one basis and lasted about an hour. As informants rated each question they were asked to 'tell the story' of that rating. In this way, qualitative and quantitative data were captured simultaneously.

The commentary, which was hand-written, was subsequently transcribed and returned to the informant for amendment and/or verification.

### **Results of the pilot**

The pilot study resulted first in a report that was circulated to all informants as well as to members of BA's recruitment, training, and line HR functions. Briefly the report fell into

two sections. The first part offered suggestions and recommendations on how BA could better help SLJs integrate into the organisation. The second part discussed new joiners' first impressions of BA the value of the impressions and the consonance with what their managers said. What is noteworthy, but perhaps not surprising, about these impressions is that so many of the issues brought to the fore relate to the four OS theoretical questions that the study was designed to consider. What and how are newcomers learning in order to get to grips with the new organisation? What is the relationship between fitting in/getting on and time? Which experienced organisational members are most influential in the OS process? What part does the newcomer play in his OS? The issues raised in relation to each of these are shown in Appendix 4.

Second, the pilot study prompted a review of the study's methodology based on the responses to the report, observations and suggestions from pilot study informants, and further reflection on the work to date. This resulted in three changes: the inclusion of two time points for data gathering. A few minor amendments to the questionnaire (Appendix 5 details these), and the endorsement of the design decision to include a group of job movers and their managers in the subsequent full study. (Pre-pilot discussion with the sponsor took place on the value of including job movers. At this stage the decision was made not to include them. The pilot group informants recommended that such a group would add value to the study. This was then agreed).

## **Summary**

This section has described how the pilot study was carried out and noted the results. The following section describes the method of data collection for the full study including the planning and positioning of the study, the sample, the questionnaire and interview. The results of the data collection form the subsequent main section of this document.

## **The full study**

The full study was positioned similarly to the pilot study. The data was collected as designed: with a sample of individual SLJs/their bosses, and with a comparison group of senior level job movers/their bosses, via questionnaire and one-to-one interviews. The instrument used was a twenty-item questionnaire (used in Ashforth and Saks's, 1996 study and, as described, minimally modified for this study) administered at two time points. The interview used the questionnaire items as prompts to collect qualitative data. Additionally, some participant observation and some document analysis formed part of the data collection. These aspects are covered in turn in the following sections. The section concludes with a brief discussion on ethics.

## **Positioning the study**

Following the pilot study (deemed to be a valuable organisational exercise), all SLJs were informed in the joining process that they would be encouraged to participate in the full study. An e-mail to this effect was sent by the Director of HR, together with the lay summary, when joiners started with BA. As stated in this e-mail SLJs were contacted within six weeks of joining to arrange a date for the first interview. Appendix 6 shows the positioning email and lay summary.

At the start of each interview it was clearly stated that if the researcher found a discrepancy in the role-changer's view of the situation and that of his boss (for example, if the SLJ thought he was doing a magnificent job and his manager thought he was under-performing) then she, the researcher, would suggest that the two parties needed to have a conversation, but would not state the specific reasons. The HR Director had requested that this be agreed with each participant. In the event the situation did not arise, but the concerns exemplified how the researcher's role 'see-sawed' between the pursuit of academic knowledge and organisational development, as discussed earlier in this thesis.



## **The sample**

On a monthly basis the researcher received, from the HR administration department, a list of the new joiners and senior manager job movers for that month. The design aimed to include all SLJs for the one-year study. (Grades of SM were not differentiated). This meant that there was no need to select certain new joiners from a larger pool.

As described earlier the plan was to match SLJs with job movers. As there were far more job movers than joiners, a sample of these did have to be selected from a wider pool. Criteria for selection were, first, that the mover had to have moved both department and boss. In this sense they came as close as possible to an external hire. They too were making a significant role change. Second they were selected to ensure that the boss was not questioned twice; i.e. if it was noticed that the boss had recruited both an internal and an external person the boss would only be approached in relation to the external hire. (A potential cause for concern that proved unfounded was the possibility that the same manager would first recruit an internal hire matching the criteria and then an external one. This might have resulted in an external hire being excluded from the data.) Third, where possible, movers were selected from across the organisation so that every department was represented in the survey.

## **SLJ group**

The new joiner group comprised seventeen people. Five (29%) of these were women and four (23.5%) were non-UK nationals, including one woman. (All these four left within one year of joining). The average age of the sample was thirty-eight. The sample represented all the main departments of BA apart from Customer Service and Operations (which as mentioned does not 'believe in' external hires), Engineering (which was not hiring externally during this period) and Flight Operations (pilots are brought in at a young age and trained by BA). The table below profiles the full SLJ group:



**TABLE 19: SLJ GROUP PROFILE**

Date of joining	Department	Age joining on	Previous sector
April 1999	Revenue Management	32	Finance
April 1999	Sales	41	Property
April 1999	Health Services	49	Public Sector
May 1999	Procurement	37	Airline
May 1999	Im	41	IT
June 1999	Legal	37	Insurance
July 1999	Marketing	38	Consulting
July 1999	Pensions	55	Banking
August 1999	Corporate Finance	33	Telecomms
September 1999	Im	36	Finance
September 1999	Im	44	IT
September 1999	Human Resources	35	Leisure
October 1999	Cargo	48	Manufacturing
October 1999	Strategy	27	Consulting
December 1999	Sales	38	Airline
January 2000	Internal audit	27	Legal
February 2000	Investments/Joint Ventures	35	Consulting
Average age		38	

**Mover group**

The mover group was brought into the data collection on a month by month basis on a par with new joiners. The table below profiles this group. The group of seventeen comprised eight (47%) women, and nine (53%) men. It included one female non-UK national (who was still with BA in October 2001, having transferred to Head Office from her country of birth where she had been working with BA).

**TABLE 20: MOVER GROUP PROFILE**

From	To	Age at move	Years with BA
Finance	Passenger Accounting	31	6
Customer Service and Ops	Marketing	33	9
Passenger Business	Customer Service and Ops	41	23
Strategy	Human Resources	42	2
Overseas country manager	HQ Finance	30	3
Im	Procurement	42	15
Finance	Cargo	32	4
Finance	Shareholder Value	29	4
Marketing	Customer Service and Ops	38	15
Passenger Business	Cargo	48	23

Internal consulting	Recruitment	36	20
Passenger Business	Catering	41	10
Overseas engineering	HQ engineering	45	28
Marketing	Strategy	44	6
Passenger Business	Sales	48	29
Overseas Country Manager	H Q Security Services	34	11
Cargo	Engineering	40	23
Average		38	13.5

**Samples compared**

The table below shows key aspects of the two groups compared.

**TABLE 21: SLJS AND MOVERS COMPARED**

	Joiners (17)	Movers (17)
Men	12	8
Women	5	9
Non UK nationals	4	1
Left within one year	4 (all non-UK nationals)	1 (part-time woman with 15 years service)
Average age	38	38
Average length of service	n/a	13.5

Comparing the two groups (joiners and movers) it is interesting to note that the average age of both is the same, thirty-eight. The feeling that there is a 'right' age for a senior manager became apparent when interviewing SMs in their 20s. Both they and their managers mentioned youth as being an issue, as the comments below make clear:

It's frustrating to me because although I value age and experience the mere fact of this is no claim to wisdom or anything else. The firm values length of tenure more than is healthy. (Joe, aged 27)

He came in as an SM Beta - it's caused a lot of resentment. He was brought in on this grade to justify his salary. He has a lot to learn to merit his grade at his age. (Joe's boss)

The comparison table reveals a number of differences in the gender profile. There are more 'home-grown' women than recruited-in women. Also noticeable is the fact that of the total joiner/mover group of thirty-four people, five (14%) people who could be considered 'different' by virtue of gender or nationality all left. Similarly, within the pilot

group, two of the three women left within a year of joining while none of the men did (though three men left subsequently).

In the full study, one SLJ was boss to one of the movers, and one mover was boss to one of the SLJs. Thus the individuals were interviewed four times each (twice on their own account, and twice in relation to their staff member).

Not included in the study, but also interviewed, were seven other SLJs who were outside the timescale of the study (either before or after), but had heard the process was useful and wanted to participate. Their bosses were not interviewed.

### Comments on sample

The entire group surveyed, i.e. the pilot study, the main study and the seven SLJs outside the time period, totalled a hundred-and-one people. Of these, nine were members of the BA Leadership Team (out of a total of twelve Executive Directors), and thirty-four were members of BA's management team (out of a total of eighty-two people). The people interviewed were spread across the business areas. The figures related to the leadership and management teams are detailed in the table below, and an organisation chart of this group is shown in Appendix 7.

**TABLE 22: NUMBER OF INFORMANTS IN BA'S MANAGEMENT TEAM**

	Number	%
<b>Total informant group</b>	101	
New joiners pilot study	14	
New joiners full study	17	
Movers full study	17	
Bosses pilot study	12	
Joiners' bosses full study	17	
Movers' bosses full study	17	
Joiners outside study dates	7	
Members of informant group who were members of BA's leadership team (ie executive directors)	9	75% of leadership team
Members of informant group who were members of BA's full management team	34	38% of management team



including the leadership team		
Spread of informants across business areas within full management team		
Finance	3	
Strategy	6	
Marketing and e-business	3	
Sales world-wide	3	
Health services	1	
Customer service and ops	3	
Technical ops	2	
Investments and joint ventures	3	
General counsel	4	
Human resources	5	
Flight ops	1	

From this it is evident that both quantitative and qualitative information was received from a representative sample of the airline at the most senior level. At this level all business areas except Customer Service and Ops were providing information on joiners either from the joiner or from his manager.

At the next level down of senior management, eight of the eleven areas were providing information on both joiners and movers. The three who did not were Customer Service and Ops (who provided information only on movers), and Flight Ops and Health Services (who had no joiners or movers at this level within the time period).

In terms of the adequacy of the size of the sample in relation to BA's senior management, the one-hundred-and-one total informant group represented 18% of the total of five-hundred-and-sixty senior managers and was spread across the business areas.

This study has previously discussed aspects of sample characteristics, notably the focus on first job newcomers, which previous research had commented on. By taking senior staff from a range of professional occupations (as evidenced by the spread across the business areas) and seeking information on the job transition experience either inter-organisationally or intra-organisationally, this study extended previous research in terms of sample characteristics.



## **The interview and the questionnaire**

One-to-one meetings were scheduled with the SLJ six weeks after he had joined. A mover who conformed to the criteria was selected and met at the same time in order to minimise the possibility of 'noise' from the organisation skewing informants' views. Meetings were booked with the bosses as close in time as possible to the meeting with the SLJ/mover, again to minimise 'noise'.

The researcher took to each meeting the lay summary (shown in Appendix 6) and the appropriate questionnaire, one for the mover and joiner, and a similar one for the boss (shown in Appendix 8). As the informant rated the each question the researcher asked him to give information on the rating. This dialogue aimed to contextualise the particular rating, to add richness, to provide examples, and to explore and clarify it. As with the pilot study, the researcher hand-wrote the response for later transcription. The transcript was sent to the informant for amendment and/or verification.

This approach served a number of purposes. It provided a validity check for the responses given to the questionnaire items (Glesne 1999) and it allowed the researcher to see how the informant interpreted the questionnaire items. It provided a structured hanger for obtaining qualitative data, adding a degree of confidence to the questionnaire replies (Easterby-Smith et al 1996) and allowing informants to see where the process was going and how far they had got during the hour. (They could identify which points they wanted to expand on/talk about.)

It made it relatively easy to compare responses between the first and second time points and between the groups of informants. It enabled both observation of non-verbal clues which served to guide the interview in an appropriate direction and understanding of the

'constructs that the interviewee used as a basis for opinions and beliefs' (Easterby-Smith et al 1996:73).

In addition it formed an information pool which proved invaluable for subsequent organisational decisions. For example there was no questionnaire item about administrative procedures, but several SLJs spoke about this. They reported a variety of experiences, for example:

There are major problems with admin issues. I'm still not on certain systems. It wastes time and is stressful. BA needs a tighter approach - it compares badly with ... (previous organisation) (Matt)

When I started everything was in place. Here everything worked from day one. ... (new boss) said she wanted me to be comfortable from the start. (Kim)

The chosen approach enabled sensitive subject matter to be explored in a truthful way in a confidential situation. SLJs and movers frequently sought reassurance that what they were saying would not be divulged to their bosses and would remain entirely unattributable, fearing that their remarks might prove 'career limiting'.

Finally, it provided insights and identified further sources of evidence (Yin 1994). For example, one boss recommended a particular job mover (who had not been selected for the study) for interview as he felt useful information would be forthcoming. In two other cases the SLJs put the researcher in touch with outside agencies, one a source of 'inplacement' services, another an organisation with similar issues relating to SLJs as BA.

## **The questionnaire**

Turning now to the questionnaire, and specifically its wording. As described earlier, the twenty items were previously used in Ashforth and Saks's (1996) study and slightly

modified for BA use both before and after the pilot study. Sitting with the informants as they rated the questions demonstrated the value of supporting the questionnaire with the interview. Informants felt some questions were worded in a way that was too 'black and white', or loaded in a particular direction. Their preference was to pick aspects or words to reflect on and discuss in more detail. Some wanted to put more than one rating depending on whether they were scoring in relation to, for example, their bosses, or their subordinates. The table below illustrates questions that the majority of informants deliberated over or commented on (in relation to the wording) at more length than the other questions:

**TABLE 23: QUESTIONS INFORMANTS TALKED MORE ABOUT**

Question	Comments
1. I have been made to feel that my skills and abilities are very important in BA.	Informants variously chose peers, boss and their own team as validators of this. They would have preferred to give a scale for each group or individual they had in mind. 'Made' was commented on as being too strong.
2. Almost all of my colleagues have been supportive of me.	There was discrepancy over who people chose as 'colleagues'. Some interpreting it as their immediate peer group, others as a wider peer group, others as their team.
3. I have had to change my attitudes to be accepted in BA.	Informants commented on the scope of 'BA' preferring to scale in relation to their own group or department. Some informants balked at the word 'attitudes'. Their preference was for the word 'style'.
4. My colleagues have gone out of their way to help me adjust to BA.	Informants commented on the scope of 'BA' preferring to scale in relation to their own group or department. (See also comments on Q2 above).
6. BA does not try to change the values and beliefs of newcomers.	Many informants talked at length on this question. In doing so they differentiated between values and beliefs.
8. The following statement describes the attitude of BA towards newcomers: 'We like you as you are: don't change'.	<div>Again informants talked at length on this question. This informant's comment typifies many:</div> <div>I'm fine with 'I like you as you are', but uncomfortable with 'don't change'. We all have obligations to change. The dangerous risk is not changing and becoming a frog in boiling water. (Pete)</div>



10. I am still learning what's acceptable in BA.	<p>This question was taken by informants to imply that there was a point at which they would stop learning i.e. would have learned enough to get on in the organisation. This gave rise to many comments noting that at any stage in one's career (and life) it's necessary to learn. Again one comment typifies many:</p> <p>Agree. If you're not still learning you're going to fall over. If you stop learning you stop working. (Zak)</p>
11. I have been put through what could be called an initiation test.	The word 'initiation' tended to pull people up short. Different interpretations gave rise to different scales. Some people viewed 'an initiation test' from a black and white somewhat negative perspective while others considered it as complex concept and talked at some length about it.
16. My job requires me to work without guidance and supervision.	Informants talked about 'guidance' as being different from 'supervision' and tended to scale on one or the other.

These types of responses, indicating a broad range of interpretation of the questionnaire wording, might call into question the validity and reliability of the instrument. Partly on this count Ashforth suggested to this study's researcher that 'you measure socialisation at both time periods, since we encountered trouble from reviewers who felt we needed to establish the durability (test-retest reliability) of socialisation' (e-mail from Ashforth to the researcher, 27 January 1999). The researcher took this piece of advice.

Following the pilot, the researcher made an additional judgement that deliberating on the questions and mulling over the wording was part of the process of reflecting on the concepts and the thoughts behind them. The one question that might have benefited from amendment following the pilot was question six where informants considered 'values' and 'beliefs' separately. (The first question relating to skills and abilities did not cause this separation. Informants tended to consider them jointly as 'capabilities'.)



## **Two time points**

The design called for two interviews with the SLJs, the movers and their bosses, one at six weeks and the other at six months into the job. This decision was made bearing in mind Ashforth's advice that 'the four and ten month periods were necessarily somewhat arbitrary. I would actually suggest that you move the periods up since the bulk of adjustment seems to happen fairly quickly.' (e-mail from Ashforth to the researcher, 27 January 1999).

What happened in practice was that the first meeting (at six weeks) was almost always arranged without difficulty and took place at roughly the desired time point. However, the second meeting, at the six-month point, was much more difficult to arrange because of the problem of time availability of the researcher and of the informants. During the period of the study April 1999 – 2000 it seemed that workloads increased and people generally had less time to spare for 'nice to haves' (as almost anything outside keeping the day-to-day operation running was felt to be). As a result there was no consistent time for second interviews across the informants, although all took place within eight months of joining or moving. Despite timing issues, this willingness to participate appears to suggest that the informants found the exercise personally worthwhile.

## **Value of two time points**

Evidence of the value of the exercise was forthcoming when the second meeting took place. Most informants wanted to have copies of the two sets of documentation so that they could compare their own responses. This was sent after the second meeting. (The researcher did not look at the first set of notes immediately before the second meeting, as she did not want to be influenced by what had gone before). Additionally several movers/joiners commented that they had taken some actions consciously influenced by issues raised in the first interview as they had found it a helpful way of reflecting on their

role transition as a prelude to action. They noted that this was the only forum they had available to them in which to undertake this reflection.

Several bosses commented that they had discussed the observations they had derived from the one-to-one meeting with their new staff member and it had proved a useful vehicle for developing both that relationship and the staff member's performance.

In other words, it appeared that the study was as useful in giving reflective time as a prelude to action to individual participants as it was in giving useful information to the organisation. It may be that organisationally endorsed reflective time would benefit managers in transition. Certainly the eleven (32%) participants who had experienced some significant job change between first and second interviews individually noted the value to them. The table below shows the transitions these eleven managers experienced during the six months they were participating in the study.

**TABLE 24: INFORMANTS EXPERIENCING SIGNIFICANT CHANGE WITHIN SIX MONTHS**

Joiner	Comment	Mover	Comment
A	Boss changed job (but joiner still reported to him)	A	Boss changed
B	Boss changed	B	Boss changed
C	Boss changed	C	Boss changed + 3 re-organisations in the department
D	Changed job (but same boss)	D	Boss changed
E	Role doubled but same boss	E	New role in organisation but boss stayed the same
		F	New role in organisation but boss stayed the same

The types of findings might contribute to the debate on the 'learning partnership' possibilities of academic and organisational development research (Morsing and Vendelo: undated).

## **Participant observation**

It has already been noted that the researcher was a BA employee. This meant that there were some organisation benefits and some organisation costs in undertaking the study.

One of the benefits was that the researcher as participant took on the role of influencer and initiator of actions, where the contact with the informants identified general issues related to the professionalism of the HR Department. An example of this was her working with colleagues to speed up and improve the administration associated with joining.

A second benefit was that it became de facto part of the researcher's role to meet with new joiners (and also conduct exit interviews with leavers), even though the formal research study period had ended. On this basis she was also asked to comment on changes being made to the induction programmes and management training programmes, and generally became known in the organisation as having expertise and interest in this aspect of HR work.

A price was paid when the researcher was party to information that was of a private or confidential nature, for example someone signalling (or stating) an intention to quit the organisation. Here the researcher maintained the confidentiality of the relationship, possibly at the expense of the organisation. This type of information overrode the researcher's own organisational membership.

A further price was paid came when the researcher was unable to intervene because the issue was outside her sphere of influence or jurisdiction. For example, she observed certain external hires being employed because someone (in a position of power) 'liked' them. Such individuals totally circumvented the senior manager assessment process, a cause of organisational concern among other staff who saw what was going on.



In day-to-day reality it became evident that, whilst the researcher was able to maintain the confidentiality of the interactions with the individual participants throughout the process, the fact of doing the work created an emergent role (Glesne 1999) - that of 'expert' in SLJs.

Turning to the benefits of the research and the costs to it. There was undoubtedly a benefit in the researcher being known in the organisation. Because she had professional credibility and reputation within BA she had wide and open access to information and people.

A cost to the research was that the amount of time available to do it was limited by the demands of a full time, senior level 'day job'. For example 'real' work took precedence over research work when it came to making appointments with informants. Additionally, it could be argued that where the researcher had influenced changes (as with the admin procedures) SLJs coming later in the research period had different experiences from those joining earlier.

On balance however, there was an adequate trade-off between the opportunities and problems presented by the researcher being an organisational member (Yin 1994).

## **Document analysis**

The research included analysis of several internal reports on management induction that had been generated over the years at both corporate and departmental levels. (These are listed in the bibliography). Other documentary sources of information included performance management documentation and the succession planning and talent management process.



Additionally internal HR employee data system print-outs were obtained which provided information on turnover rates, churn, and departmental staffing profiles. This printed information enabled questions to be raised about the patterns of movement and joining at senior levels. (One mentioned already is the lack of external hires to Customer Service and Operations.)

As noted above, it is likely that as an employee the researcher was allowed easy access to documentary material. This access might have been difficult for a non-employed researcher to obtain.

### **A note on ethics**

The two preceding sections (on the participant observer role and the document analysis) hint at the ethical considerations raised during this study. Ethical considerations are 'inseparable from .. everyday interactions with research participants and with the data' (Glesne 1999:113). It would have been relatively easy, for example, for the researcher to have used her privileged access as an organisational member to the detriment of other members (perhaps by divulging what 'x' thought of his boss).

Extending this concept, it could be argued that in order to gain a reputation for professionalism and credibility in an organisation one would have to play fair. Easterby-Smith et al (1996:62) point out that, for a researcher, getting on in the organisation is largely a function of the personality of the researcher and his skills in dealing with 'what are sometimes very complex interpersonal relationships'.

The personality of the researcher and his skills need to combine to ensure 'simple considerations of fairness, honesty, openness of intent, disclosure of methods, the end for which the research is executed, a respect for the integrity of the individual, the obligation of the researcher to guarantee unequivocally individual privacy, and an informed

willingness on the part of the subject to participate voluntarily in the research activity' (Leedy 1997:116).

The researcher of this study was a member of the Institute of Management Consultancy. As such she was bound by the IMC Code of Conduct, and its Ethical Guidelines, as well as to her personal principles of what constitutes ethical behaviour. The IMC Ethical Guidelines are founded on three basic principles: high standards of service to the client; independence, objectivity and integrity; responsibility to the profession. These are underpinned by two 'touchstones or tests to use' - transparency and vulnerability. Transparency 'means the degree to which there is openness in the situation'. Vulnerability 'refers to the extent to which each stakeholder's interests are at risk as a result of the proposed action (or inaction)'. (Institute of Management Consultancy 1999:23).

In order to help members deal with an ethical problem, the guidelines put some 'questions for testing possible ethical dilemmas'. These enable rigorous self-questioning. In conducting this research the value of this form of professional support proved very helpful to the researcher.

From an alternative perspective, the personal ethics of the informants had as much bearing on the situation as the ethics of the researcher. It would have been very easy for any one of the informants, for example, to sabotage the research, take umbrage, refuse to participate, back stab the researcher, or ask for inappropriate information had he/she so desired.

The research involved a large proportion of some of the most senior and powerful people in a highly political organisation. The fact that it was 'allowed' to continue to the end with

no casualties suggests that all concerned participated with honourable intentions and in a responsible way.

## **Summary**

This chapter has described each aspect of the research process for this study. Specifically it has presented the method of positioning the study in BA, the sample characteristics, the conduct of the questionnaire completion and interview, the timing of the two meeting points and the potential value of these, the role of the researcher as a participant observer, and the document analysis. Finally the ethical considerations that came into play were discussed.

The following chapter describes the data analysis in regard to this study. It starts with a reminder of the investiture/divestiture tactic, including a review of how previous researchers have analysed it, and moves on to present the findings of this study.



## CHAPTER SEVEN: INTRODUCTION TO THE DATA ANALYSIS

This study was designed to answer the main question 'To what the extent are the investiture tactic (fitting in ) and performance (getting on) related?' Additionally, it was designed to answer a subset of further questions: what and how are newcomers learning in order to get to grips with the new organisation? What is the relationship, if any, between fitting in/getting on and time? Which experienced organisational players are most influential in the OS process? What role does the newcomer play in his OS?

The study has sought to answer these questions in a way that adds richness and texture to the debate around both the investiture/divestiture tactic and the broader OS issues. Thus, although the main question was developed from a previous study's hypothesis (Ashforth and Saks 1996) and used that study's slightly modified question set, the present study was designed with specific characteristics (described in detail in Chapter Five) that distinguished it from previous studies in three significant and fundamental ways. This study was based on an integrated model for considering the questions, it used a wide range of data collection techniques, and it analysed both quantitatively and qualitatively on a question by question basis. (Previous research had collapsed the individual questions and quantitatively analysed them as a group).

This design enabled a detailed view of aspects of the tactic to be built up. In taking this more finely sliced approach to the investiture/divestiture tactic, this study attempted to obtain clear answers to the research questions. Additionally, the data analysis sought to check whether the integrated model 'worked' as a model for OS. Clarity in both these aspects would extend theoretical knowledge of OS. As well as extending theoretical knowledge the analysis also aimed to identify areas where practical tools for



organisations to use with SLJs could be developed. In this way it was hoped to marry the differing outcomes of this study required by the academic and the commercial world.

This chapter opens with a note on the sample. This is followed by a brief discussion at the macro level on the relationship between the investiture tactic and performance. Subsequent sections discuss the findings in relation to each one of the sub-questions.

## **A note on the sample**

This research took as the units of study multiple cases within two groups of people: SLJs and their bosses. As well as these two groups there were an equal number of multiple cases in two further groups of people: job movers and their bosses. All four groups were studied at two time points.

Because there were few cases (seventeen in each group) and each group had different conditions, it was not possible to do a data analysis across the total group of sixty-four people. The statistical analysis that was done (using SPSS) accounted for the differences by keeping the groups separate. For analysis purposes there were eight groups in total:

1. SLJs time point one and time point two
2. SLJs' bosses at time points one and two
3. Job movers at time point one and two,
4. Movers' bosses at time points one and two

The small size of each group meant that the analysis needed to be considered as indicative, and for this reason the study could be considered primarily a qualitative analysis triangulated with some quantitative analysis. Studying a larger sample size would help check the reliability of the quantitative findings.

Nevertheless, the standard deviations (for each group) were all less than one, suggesting they are each homogeneous despite being drawn from a variety of departments. (Table

26 at the end of this chapter gives the mean and the standard deviation for each informant group). It is reasonable to deduce that the findings were not influenced either by departmental factors or by micro cultures. Alternatively it might be that the perception across departments in BA is similar.

### Relationship between the investiture tactic and performance

The questionnaire used in this study slightly modified the questions used in previous studies to assess the relationship between the investiture tactic and performance. The table below shows the origin of each question and what it was designed to test. (Appendix 5 gives further detail on the questionnaire design).

TABLE 25: QUESTIONNAIRE ITEMS - ORIGINS

This study's question	Originating study	Designed to test
I have been made to feel that my skills and abilities are very important in BA	Jones (1986)	Investiture
Almost all my colleagues have been supportive of me	Ditto	Ditto
I have had to change my attitudes to be accepted in BA	Ditto	Ditto
My colleagues have gone out of their way to help me adjust to BA	Ditto	Ditto
Longer serving staff have held me at a distance until they understand my ways of working	Ditto	Ditto
BA does not try to change the values and beliefs of newcomers	Ashforth and Saks (1996)	Ditto
I have learned that certain behaviours of mine are not considered acceptable in BA	Ditto	Ditto
The following statement describes the attitude of BA towards newcomers: 'We like you as you are don't change'.	Ditto	Ditto
In BA you must bide your time before you are fully accepted	Ditto	Ditto
I am still learning what's acceptable in BA	Ditto	Ditto
I have been put through what could be called an initiation test	Ditto	Ditto
Working in BA has met my expectations	N/A	Ditto
I am satisfied with the quality of work I am able to deliver	Ashforth and Saks (1996)	Work performance
The amount of effort I am putting in is less than I expected	Ditto	Ditto
I find the job more stretching/challenging than I expected	Ditto	Ditto
My job tests my ability to work without guidance or	Ditto	Ditto

supervision		
I have a lighter workload than that of longer serving staff	Ditto	Ditto
I am not able to work as effectively as I would like with my colleagues	Ditto	Ditto
I am showing less initiative in doing the job than I expected	Ditto	Ditto
I have to deliver work at a faster pace than I am used to	Ditto	Ditto

In order to find out whether this study confirmed or disconfirmed Ashforth and Saks's (1996) hypothesis that there was a relationship between investiture and performance, this study's data were analysed on the same basis; i.e. on the SLJ group at time points one and two:

1. By clustering question numbers 1 – 11 (investiture questions) as one group and correlating with performance questions 13 – 20.
2. By clustering question numbers 1 – 5 (investiture questions) and correlating with performance questions 13 – 20. (Questions 1 – 5 were Jones's 1996 questions modified slightly for this study). This study showed a very strong correlation at time point one  $r=.749$  ( $p<0.01$ ), and at time point two  $r=.747$  ( $p<0.01$ )
3. By clustering question numbers 6 – 11 (investiture questions) and correlating with performance questions 13 – 20. (Questions 6 – 11 were Ashforth and Saks's questions modified slightly for this study). This study showed a very strong correlation at time point one  $r=.849$  ( $p<0.01$ ), and at time point two  $r=.615$  ( $p<0.05$ )

Thus this study confirmed the findings of Ashforth and Saks's (1996) study that there is a strong relationship between investiture and performance.

This finding, however, does not go very far towards answering the question 'What is the extent of the relationship between the investiture tactic and performance?' It has simply identified that there is a relationship. By clustering the questions it is only possible to identify a relationship at a high level.



This study attempted to answer the main question ('To what extent are the investiture tactic and performance related?') by answering the four sub-questions from both a quantitative and a qualitative perspective.

It treated the investiture/divestiture tactic as a standalone tactic (independent of the other tactics). Each of the twenty items on the questionnaire was labelled as a variable (Appendix 9 shows the variable related to each question). Thus it was possible quantitatively to analyse relationships between the variables and to relate the findings to the qualitative data.

This study analysed the quantitative data using Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient (as the Ashforth and Saks's 1996 study). The following chapters analyse the data at detailed level. Because of the previously discussed issues of sample size the emphasis is on the qualitative data. Significant quantitative data findings are included in the body of the text.

## **Summary**

This chapter has outlined the data analysis approach taken in this study. It has noted that because of the small sample size the quantitative data are indicative only. The data were analysed in the same way that Ashforth and Saks's (1996) data were analysed, and similarly found a strong relationship between investiture and performance. It was noted that this method of analysis was not able to shed light on the extent of the relationship between investiture and performance. The following chapters explain how the data were analysed in a way that was able to do this by examining the four sub-questions from a predominantly qualitative perspective.



	Cap abilit y	Supp ort	Attitu de	Adju stme nt	Inclu sion	Valu es	Beha viour s	Acce ptan ce	Lear ning	Initia tion	Expe ctati on	Quali ty	Effor t	Chall enge	Guid ance	Work load	Effec tiveness	Initia tive		
Movers time one mean	6.06	6.06	4.24	4.41	3.18	3.76	4.59	4.06	3.59	3.82	2.88	5.82	4.53	2.47	5.00	6.24	1.65	3.82	2.53	2.7
Movers time one standard deviation	0.90	1.48	1.95	1.66	2.21	2.08	2.35	1.56	2.12	2.04	2.29	1.74	1.74	1.33	1.46	1.35	1.22	2.38	1.46	1.7
Movers time two mean	6.13	5.94	3.44	4.31	2.94	3.50	5.19	4.50	3.38	2.75	2.69	5.19	5.44	3.00	4.25	6.00	1.88	3.56	3.00	2.8
Movers time two standard deviation	1.50	1.29	2.22	1.58	1.95	1.97	1.97	1.97	2.19	2.24	2.09	1.72	1.31	1.83	1.57	1.59	1.26	1.90	1.75	2.0
Movers' bosses time one mean	5.81	5.81	3.88	5.13	2.75	3.81	3.88	3.56	2.94	4.44	3.06	4.81	6.31	2.38	4.06	5.88	1.63	5.13	1.94	3.8
Movers' bosses time two standard deviation	1.28	1.22	2.09	1.31	1.53	1.72	2.06	1.59	1.81	1.82	2.35	1.38	0.95	2.42	1.53	1.50	1.02	2.33	1.53	1.5
Movers' bosses time two mean	5.86	5.64	4.64	5.29	2.71	4.07	4.21	3.29	3.00	3.29	3.36	5.57	6.00	1.93	3.93	6.50	2.07	4.86	2.21	3.2
Movers' bosses time one standard deviation	1.41	1.55	1.86	1.27	1.82	1.69	1.67	1.82	1.96	1.77	2.24	0.94	1.57	1.59	1.44	1.34	1.82	2.11	1.58	2.1
Joiners time one mean	6.29	6.24	3.05	4.67	3.29	3.67	5.10	4.90	3.81	5.67	3.10	5.67	4.71	2.71	4.19	6.19	3.00	4.29	2.62	2.7
Joiners time one standard deviation	0.90	0.89	1.80	1.71	2.03	1.96	2.02	1.61	2.16	1.32	1.97	1.93	1.79	1.62	1.63	0.87	1.97	2.05	1.24	1.7
Joiners time two mean	5.94	6.18	3.24	4.06	3.47	3.82	4.53	4.18	4.29	4.18	3.06	4.88	5.12	3.18	4.35	6.18	2.24	3.82	2.59	2.7
Joiners time two standard deviation	1.75	1.24	2.19	1.85	2.07	2.51	2.53	1.78	2.05	2.01	2.14	2.37	1.76	2.19	1.50	1.01	1.92	1.98	1.58	1.6
Joiners' bosses time one mean	5.94	5.72	3.44	5.11	3.17	3.61	4.28	3.94	4.11	4.94	2.11	5.28	5.94	1.94	3.72	5.33	2.22	6.00	2.11	3.2
Joiners' bosses time one standard deviation	1.70	1.32	1.89	1.60	2.26	1.69	1.67	1.63	2.08	1.66	1.91	1.53	1.59	1.55	1.99	2.00	1.83	2.06	1.68	1.8
Joiners' bosses time two mean	6.47	5.71	3.76	4.71	3.41	3.35	4.59	4.29	4.35	3.24	3.82	4.76	6.18	2.24	3.47	6.24	1.88	5.35	2.65	3.6
Joiners' bosses time two standard deviation	0.72	1.05	1.79	1.26	2.29	1.46	2.18	1.69	1.93	1.71	2.21	2.19	1.47	2.22	2.10	1.25	1.80	1.93	2.21	1.5

TABLE 26: MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS FOR INFORMANT GROUPS



## CHAPTER EIGHT: WHAT AND HOW ARE SLJS LEARNING?

Six weeks into the role SLJs talk about learning in three content areas. First there is what Ostroff and Kozlowski (1992) describe as the organisational domain, and second what they call the work role domain. Although OS literature concerned with content models mentions a number of other content domains these two were the only ones discussed by this study's informants. Third, SLJs talk about the airline industry. (It is of note that industry knowledge was not a domain mentioned by previous researchers). The following sections discuss these aspects in more detail. The discussion is illustrated by quotes (in the shaded boxes) from individuals within the informant groups. Although names are attached to the quotes they are not the real names of the individuals.

### The organisational domain

The organisational domain focuses 'on the politics, power and value premises of the organisational system, its mission, leadership style, special languages and so forth' (Ostroff and Kozlowski 1992:852).

Here typical SLJ comments, six weeks into the role, relate to the definitions of OS, mentioning learning 'the culture' and the unstructured and tacit knowledge that has been discussed earlier. It is this knowledge that is particularly difficult to get to grips with as they enter the new role.

They note that the knowledge they need is uncoded:

I need to get under the skin of BA to the values and spirit. It's a complicated culture. You don't get a book. (Sam)

People here 'know how it is'. You can't pick things up by osmosis so how do you pick it up? An awful lot of it is unwritten and unstructured. When you come in from outside it's extraordinary. (Ed)

They recognise the need to develop a good network:

The culture is based in networks and gossip - who knows who, what goes on. (Tom)

My network isn't up enough yet. A large part of what we do is about relationships - I'm conscious that my work is being kept back as I learn the ropes. (Sue)

They know they need to learn to play the game:

I'm quickly learning how to play the politics. I need to handle the sensitivities around the place. (Pete)

It's a power culture not a commercial culture. I need to learn the politics. (Lynn)

## **The work role domain**

The second area they say they need to learn about is also one identified by Ostroff and Kozlowski (1992:852), the work role domain which 'focuses on the boundaries of authority and responsibility, expectations and the appropriate behaviours for the position'. Here SLJs talk about:

Learning what's unacceptable, what's acceptable, what I can do in my role at my level. I don't feel I have a vast amount of data at my disposal. I don't know where to go and get information from and I've no idea of how to get hold of it. (Mike)

SLJs feel handicapped in doing their jobs because they don't know enough about the systems, structures and processes:

You fall flat on your face because you don't know the formal and informal systems. Informal structures define this place. Decisions are made in corridors. The organisation is very cloudy. It's very unclear who owns what. I still haven't got a clue what departments do and how they interact. (Alan)

I would be able to work more effectively if I understood all the processes and procedures. (Babs)

## **The airline industry**

The third thing SLJs talk say they need to learn about is that of the airline industry. None of the content models of the OS studies reviewed mentioned this organisational context and environment setting in their discussions, but for people coming from non-airline industries it was a recurring theme:

I could do much better when I know the business. I'm on a very steep learning curve. BA is a company with lots of rules, regulations, processes, and bureaucracy that are in the legacy of the place. It's hard to understand what's to be enforced because of legislation or regulation and what is not allowed. I need to learn about the industry as quickly as possible. (Ian)

I'm still scrambling up the airline learning curve. There's a huge need to get to know what the airline business is as quickly as possible. It's a challenging task to get to know this. (Bob)

However, they tend to acknowledge that the effort of gaining this kind of understanding is likely to be short term:

In the short term getting to know the organisation has been stretching and challenging. It's not an easy organisation to understand but I think I'm slowly getting there. Long term the job won't be as stretching. (Zak)



Interestingly the fact that the SLJs are in a steep learning curve does not appear to prevent them showing initiative on the job. There was a significant relationship between the variables 'learning' and 'initiative'  $r = -.692$  ( $p < 0.01$ ) (Table 28 at the end of this chapter shows the correlation matrices for SLJs six weeks into role, i.e. time point one) confirmed by comments such as:

There's plenty of scope for showing initiative. (Kim)

I was expecting to come in and take the initiative and I have been able to. (Bev)

### **How are SLJs learning?**

How they are learning was more difficult to judge from interview and observation. (It is outside the scope of this study to consider learning theory.) From the information gained it can be inferred that SLJs are learning in a combination of five ways. First, from feedback and guidance given by boss and colleagues:

... (boss) is very good at giving me feedback on how I'm doing. I'm getting guidance.  
(Fred)

People have given me positive and negative feedback. (Kev)

You can learn from each other around the coffee machines. (Dan)

Second, by comparison with previous experiences:

I hadn't been in a head office environment before. The differences between head office and field are very marked. (Bob)

The pace here is less fast than ... (previous organisation). (Lynn)

I spent time at ... (previous organisation) which is a much better structured organisation.  
(Kev)

Third, by observation of what's going on around them:

Management team meetings are very interesting - there's no agenda or meeting documentation. There's a bit too much consensus and discussion. (Dan)

When you want to talk about things they don't want to hear they don't respond. (Mike)

People don't seem to see the value of not obviously relevant experience. (Ed)

Fourth, by trial and error:

I'm learning by trial and error. I've fallen down a few times and fallen on my feet a few times. (Kim)

It's the dead rat syndrome. I offer up things and judge by the looks on people's faces whether they want it or not. (Alan)

I'm learning by doing. (Pete)

Fifth, by going out investigating and asking questions:

If I want to find out something I have to go out and find it. My attitude has been to question. (Ian)

You have to be the activator. You have to get on with it right away. (Sam)

I've gone round and met a lot of people. I have to be active in asking questions. (Kev)

These five ways of learning encompass the four learning styles promulgated by Honey and Mumford (1986). Their inventory for assessing learning style is frequently used in management training, and it might be a useful tool in supporting the design of individualised induction for newcomers. (Whether this tool has any proven reliability, or is valid as a diagnostic, has not been investigated as part of this study).

It is noticeable that people do not mention the formal induction training as a source of learning. Neither had many of the informants attended much of what was on offer. Those who had were somewhat disparaging of the experience, seeming to prefer a less structured approach such as 'In Touch' days (when a staff member shadows someone from another area). This finding contradicts Ashforth, Saks and Lee's (1998) suggestion that a large and mechanistic organisation focuses on institutionalised socialisation.

### **What do the SLJs' bosses say about learning?**

What each individual's boss said in relation to the learning experiences of his SLJ was remarkably consistent with what the SLJ himself had said. Equally there was consistency across the group of SLJs' bosses. Bosses, like SLJs, talked about the organisational domain, the role domain, and the airline industry, recognising the challenges their SLJs faced in trying to get to grips with these aspects quickly:

To join a large organisation like BA requires a lot of networking. He needs to spend a fair bit of time learning to network. (Pete's boss)

He inherited a tough team with strong personalities and he's had a hard time. His people skills are a big issue - people don't think he's on their side even if he is. (Fred's boss)

It's very stressful for him learning the new industry. (Dan's boss)



The bosses talked about their part in helping the SLJ into the organisation both at a guidance level and at a practical level. They recognised that BA would be compared with their joiner's previous organisations. Bosses were aware that the SLJ would be learning by trial and error and knew they might need support in this. However they appeared to prefer the SLJ to know when to ask for help or support and to have the skills to do so:

I gave him some guidance and set up slots in people's diaries before he arrived. (Alan's boss)

I spent a lot of time doing basic stuff to give ... Sue a view. (Sue's boss)

I'm sure the BA culture is different from what she's used to. She's now a small cog in a large wheel. (Lynn's boss)

We chunked her in and help her when requested. She's swimming' very well. (Bev's boss)

He has the confidence to ask. He checks things out. (Zak's boss)

What the bosses failed to notice (at least few mentioned) was the way the SLJs observed what was going on around them, picking up clues and signals, to help them learn. Only one boss recognised that cultural messages could be conveyed unconsciously. He noted that 'things like 'admin falling through the floorboards - becomes a coded message that BA doesn't value people'. It may be that it would help experienced organisational members integrate SLJs if they were more aware of the power of symbols and artefacts in the learning process and sensemaking (Weick 1995).

The quantitative data relating to bosses show no significant correlation between the variable 'learning' and any other in time point one.



## **What are the movers learning for the new role?**

Given the expectation that socialisation would turn out to be a lifelong process it was anticipated that job movers would provide evidence of this. This proved to be the case. However, what movers talked about learning six weeks into role was different from what the SLJs talked about learning. The movers focused on the work role domain and the group processes domain, this latter being 'concerned with co-worker interaction, group norms and values and the workgroup's normative structure' (Ostroff and Kozlowski 1992:85). Movers did not talk at all about needing to learn about the airline industry. From this it can be inferred that they may have felt comfortable with their level of knowledge of this.

### **The work role domain**

The movers who had been promoted into the role had particular concerns about how being a senior manager or general manager was different from being a manager or senior manager. They appeared to feel that they would only be able to perform effectively when they had discovered what one informant described as 'the essence of SM-ness'. This lack of clarity around SM-ness (or GM-ness) seemed to be quite stressful for people:

I need greater clarity over what more is required to be seen to be an SM. (Judy)

A lot of areas in BA are gradist - people don't bother talking to MGs and A scales. People expect more out of an SM - but I'm not sure what. (Mark)

We could do more to help people promoted into new rank/grade. I think it's important for (boss) to be mindful of the stress of it. (Stan)

## The group process domain

Talking about the group process domain, movers said they faced issues of being known in the organisation and of having been asked to take on the role, or having applied successfully for it, without necessarily having the technical expertise:

There are a number of technical aspects associated with role that I don't understand yet. Some more graunchy, nitty-gritty things I don't know so much about and need to learn.  
(Paul)

I'm not accepted as an expert in .... (technicalities of new role) so have to go about things differently. (Max)

A lot of judgements are made on the technical knowledge you have of the train set. I've sometimes felt I'm less of a human being because I don't know anything about door seals.  
(Gina)

This lack of technical knowledge appeared to make it difficult for movers to be accepted by their workgroups. One, for example, noted that:

Demonstrating knowledge of technical aspects of business becomes a rite of entry to the group. (Julie)

People who had been promoted to manage a group of which they were previously a member faced other issues:

I had concerns about moving to a level above and staying with same people. (Luke)

Fast trackers can create resentment, which is difficult to learn to manage. (Rose)

People who had been brought from other parts of the organisation also noted their need to learn ways of introducing what they had been brought in to do without alienating their new colleagues. To do this they relied on the organisational credibility they already had:

Being internal, people can know your background and have seen what you've delivered in other areas, which helps in my role to bring overseas awareness to HO. (Rob)

Better that I had background credibility in BA. I would have found it difficult to build cross-functionalism otherwise. (Jen)

The problems and issues that the group expressed in being accepted by their workgroups was confirmed by the quantitative analysis which showed a significant relationship between learning and acceptance  $r=.921(p< 0.01)$ . (Table 30, at the end of this chapter, shows the correlations for movers six weeks into the role i.e. time point one).

### **How are movers learning?**

How movers learned about their new roles was very similar to how the SLJs learned. They got feedback from their peers. (Interestingly several mentioned that they were not getting the amount of guidance from their boss that they felt they needed.) They compared their new roles with their previous experiences. They watched what was going on, tried things out and used their knowledge of organisational networks to get the information they needed. In this respect the fact of knowing the organisation was particularly beneficial. For example, movers could talk to others about the detail of their new role:

I knew who'd done the role before and talked to him when I needed to know something.  
(Rick)

I had a clear idea of what it was going to be like - I talked to the previous incumbent.  
(Greg)



## What do movers' bosses say about learning?

There was a high level of verbal consistency between what the movers said six weeks into role and what their bosses said. Like the movers, the bosses talked about the work role domain and the group process domain:

### Work role domain

Certainly there are subtle differences between MGs and SMs, and it's his first senior management role. He has to hit the ground running. (Roger's boss)

He has to learn the technicalities of the role - metrics, suppliers - and do it quickly. He's managing a lot of specialists and seasoned practitioners. He'll have to earn his stripes on this. BA is generally tough to penetrate across disciplines. (Stan's boss)

### Group process domain

He's learning about how he can make his team most effective. As an insider he already has a track record on this but not within this department. (Luke's boss)

The main angst is his speed of getting to work with peers and colleagues. He's already taken some levels of feedback. Some subordinates have suggested he's not getting up to speed as quickly as they would like. (*This after six weeks in role.*) (Paul's boss)

Bosses appeared to be aware of the variety of ways in which the movers were learning, and in a very open way several noted their own lack of involvement in helping the mover learn:

I've left him to get on with it, which can't be very helpful. (Rob's boss)

I've concluded that we need to spend more time together - I'm getting the vibes that she needs more guidance from me. (Cath's boss)



As with the SLJs' bosses, the movers' bosses quantitative data showed no significant correlation between the variable 'learning' and any other in time point one.

### **Differences between movers and joiners**

From the data analysis it appears that SLJs and movers are learning (and need to learn) different things as they start a new role. This is probably because SLJs are coming in with known or assumed technical expertise (but not organisational reputation and credibility, or industry knowledge). Movers are coming to new roles with organisational reputation and credibility and industry knowledge (but not necessarily technical expertise).

Thus in their first few weeks the SLJ's learning is focused more on learning the industry, the organisational attributes and the work roles, and less on the group processes. Because SLJs have technical expertise they are able to put it to good use in the early days, which might account for the fact that they are able to show high initiative whilst learning the ropes.

Movers, as stated, do not mention the need to learn about the industry, but do talk about the need to learn the technicalities of the role. Additionally they mention the need to find the 'essence' of their new grade compared with their old grade and, related to this, the need to learn how to be accepted by their work-teams at the new grade. Where they have changed jobs but have stayed at the same grade they still talk about the need to learn how to integrate with their new workgroup. Movers talk more about group processes than SLJs which may account for the correlation between learning and acceptance,  $r = .921(p < 0.01)$ . (See Table 30 at the end of this chapter.)

Both movers and joiners appear to use the same array of learning styles. But it seems that SLJs place more reliance on their bosses as a learning source than movers do. Bosses seem willing to make time to spend with SLJs, but less willing to make time

available to spend with movers, perhaps because the bosses assume the movers know the organisation well enough to get on without guidance. Consequently movers appear to be learning more from others who have done the job before, or from their subordinates and colleagues.

Both SLJs and movers report a high level of learning activity associated with starting their new roles. Movers (more than joiners) correlate this with acceptance within the workgroup. These data start to indicate that socialisation is ongoing throughout a person's career with an organisation, and is not simply related to moving from one organisation to another.

### **What is the relationship between learning and time?**

The previous section has considered what it was that was being learned as SLJs and movers entered the new role. It was found that the two groups were learning somewhat different things, albeit using the same array of learning techniques. Six months into the role both groups were still learning, but a different picture was emerging.

### **What were SLJs learning six months into the new role?**

Six months into the role, the expectation was that SLJs would still be learning as part of the socialisation process. This expectation was confirmed.

What was interesting was that SLJs appeared to have switched focus somewhat in what they were learning. They now seem to be more concerned with the task domain - 'understanding task duties, assignments, priorities, how to use equipment, how to handle routine problems and so forth' (Ostroff and Kozlowski 1992:852) and about the group process domain - and less with the work role domain. The organisational domain and the airline industry appeared to provoke approximately the same amount of discussion.

In terms of the task domain the topics of e-mail and meetings came up in several conversations. They were viewed as tasks people had to learn to manage. What one person described as the 'little things', had become time consuming and preoccupying, in part perhaps because:

We've done lots of new stuff but haven't got rid of the old stuff. This is causing work/life balance problems. (Kev)

Other people remarked similarly on having to learn to balance the job and life:

The size of my job means that I'm busy. Long hours become a whole family lifestyle.  
(Dan)

E-mail means I'm constantly in touch with the job. Learning to deal with this and balance work with the rest of my life is tough. (Lynn)

When group processes were discussed, SLJs noted they were having to deal with people-related issues in their team:

My people are not aware of the commercial realities - I'm having to learn to deal with a high degree of sensitivity in saying that some people will be less of a fit in my department.  
(Sam)

I can be too direct and challenging with my people - they can take exception to it. I'm having to learn to be more receptive to people's lifestyles. (Babs)

I've had to learn to sell to my team rather than tell them. It seems that even the uninvolved have a God-given right to inform decisions. (Bob)



In developing their learning to cover these other domains, it became evident that SLJs were learning to change their behaviours and style (categorised by Ostroff and Kozlowski 1992 as within the work role domain). It is not surprising that there was a high degree of correlation between learning and behaviour,  $r = -.500$ ,  $p < 0.01$ . (Table 29, at the end of this chapter, shows the correlation matrices for SLJs six months into role; i.e. time point two). Behaviours are discussed in more detail in Chapter Ten.

Giving more focus to the task and to the group domains did not mean that SLJs had stopped learning about the airline industry, and by this stage some saw this as a longer term learning task than they had first anticipated:

I'm still learning things about airline/aviation. I need a full understanding of the industry for my role. I think will take me about two years to get to that stage. (Tom)

I still feel weak on airline knowledge and it has been challenging learning the industry. (Mike)

Nor had they stopped learning in the organisational domain, and again several commented on the ongoing nature of this, not just for SLJs, but for everyone:

We're all learning what's acceptable in BA. It's changing as an organisation. It's not standing still. There's going to be a lot of change in the next few months. (Kim)

Yes, and I always will be learning - what's acceptable in BA is always going to change. People have to change with it. (Fred)

Yes, I'm still learning what's acceptable in BA and I'll still be saying that in five years. (Sue)



In terms of style of learning, it appeared that SLJs at six months into the role were still learning by trial and error, with less emphasis on reflection and observation. This was possibly because they had become closely involved in the day to day job, which allowed less time for reflection.

### **What the SLJs' bosses were noticing**

The shift in focus in the SLJs' learning was matched by a shift in what their bosses were noticing about the SLJs' learning. Six months in it was becoming apparent that what some bosses called 'the honeymoon period' was over, and that they were looking almost exclusively at the task domain. Specifically, they expected the SLJ to have learned how to deliver rapidly, exhibiting the 'right' behaviours while doing so. In making this comment, bosses realised it was a bit of a double-edged sword:

Our challenge is to make sure we don't lose the edge that we've bought and brought in.

(Ed's boss)

He's challenging less. From my perspective that's not so welcome as we brought him in to challenge, but for his team it's better. (Pete's boss)

She has learned to change her style somewhat. I don't necessarily think it's desirable. I don't want her to change too much. We need to value the difference. (Kim's boss)

I hope she's not learning to moderate her behaviour. (Bab's boss)

Balancing this was what appeared to be irritation where they felt the SLJ hadn't learned what it was necessary to deliver:

He's not as effective as he might be if he made an effort to understand the political nuances better. (Ian's boss)

She needs to spend more time taking a sleeves-up approach. (Sue's boss)

He hasn't picked things up and isn't able to contribute to meetings as quickly as I would have liked. I'm getting warning bells from the people he's managing. (Alan's boss)

By this point, bosses appeared to be making a judgement on whether or not they had recruited the right person for the job, by comparing the SLJ with his peers. Bosses had stopped balancing newness with delivery capability, and simply expected the SLJ to have learned enough to be performing to the same level as other senior managers:

My only criticism is his lack of delivery. (Kev's boss)

He's been an outstanding success. He's comfortably achieved far more than I expected of him. He's recognised as the best of my managers although he's the newest. (Dan's boss)

The issues are with delivery. She's not interested in this area. (Sue's boss)

He stands head and shoulders above other people in the team. He pushes ideas. He's the manager who most influences me. (Zak's boss)

As with time point one bosses' quantitative data showed no significant correlation between the variable 'learning' and any other variable. (Tables 32 and 33 at the end of this chapter show the correlation matrices for SLJs' bosses in time points one and two).

### **What were movers learning six months into the new role?**

There was very little difference in what movers said six weeks into the role and six months into the role. They were still primarily focused on learning what was acceptable in terms of work role and group processes. Several of them had been through significant

organisational changes in the period (see Table 24, Chapter Six), and noted the need to learn continuously what was acceptable as their roles and responsibilities changed:

**Work role**

You're learning and adjusting all the time to delicacies/nuances/flavours. (Jill)

I need to carry on learning. Things evolve. People and departments change. (Roger)

I'm in a constant learning curve because of re-organisations. (Max)

If you're not still learning you're going to fall over. Part of the culture of this company is to carry on learning - so it should be. If you stop learning you should stop working. (Fran)

**Group processes**

Some of my learning came from Employee Opinion Survey feedback. I had a very good session with my team on this. (Judy)

I'm still learning. I have to rely on other people's expertise. I'm not a guru. (Greg)

I'm still learning about leadership. Some of the practical things I could have been taught. For example, how much people would watch and interpret my actions. (Rick)

Yes I'm still learning. I've made huge assumptions about what I can and can't do. What's acceptable and what's important to people. What are the taboos. (Jen)

What movers said they were learning as they entered the new role and what they said they were learning six months later is supported by the same correlation (between learning and acceptance) that was significant at the first time point. It was similarly



significant at the second  $r=.634$ ,  $p<0.01$ . (Table 31 at the end of this chapter shows the correlation matrices for movers in six months into role i.e. time point two.)

### **What were their bosses saying about learning?**

Mover's bosses, like SLJs' bosses, were clear that what they were now looking for was quick and effective delivery. Their comments were geared, either positively or negatively, to whether they felt the mover had learned enough to perform well:

I get frustrated by people not performing to their potential. She's not a good delegator and hasn't learned this yet. (Jill's boss)

With his workteam he's learned how to be effective. He's having issues with his superiors - he needs to learn better upward management if he's going to get on. (Max's boss)

He doesn't fit into the role - he's a backroom guy rather than front of house. He's tried. (Rick's boss)

He learned the business quickly but hasn't learned to change his style. (Mark's boss)

Like the movers, bosses noted the need to learn continuously yet, unlike the movers themselves, emphasised that in doing so it was necessary to present confidently:

People need to learn all the time. You've got to be out and about, listening and responding, leading by example. His job (and mine) is to look happy and confident. (Greg's boss)

He needs to be confident in what he's learning and showing that he's learning the right things. He's learning about deadlines, which I wouldn't expect him to skip. People are looking to see that he's fulfilled their expectations in getting the job. (Rob's boss)



As with time point one, movers bosses' quantitative data showed no significant correlation between the variable 'learning' and any other variable in time point two. (See Table 33 at the end of this chapter.)

Summary

The data make it clear that both SLJs and job movers are in a continuous process of learning what is and what is not acceptable to do their job.

The indications are that the two groups are learning different things. It may be that this is because SLJs come to the new role with external reputation and professional expertise, but without specific organisational knowledge. Over the period the data was collected the SLJs appear to change the focus of their learning, while the movers do not. Table 27 below summarises what each group reported learning at each time period.

TABLE 27: LEARNING DOMAINS OF SLJS AND MOVERS

	SLJs		Movers	
Content domain (Ostroff and Kozlowski 1992)	Time one	Time two	Time one	Time two
Job related tasks	X	√	X	X
Work roles	√	X	√	√
Group processes	X	√	√	√
Org attributes	√	√	X	X
Airline industry	√	√	X	X

Both groups of people used the same array of five learning styles throughout the period, with the SLJs appearing to get more learning support from their bosses than the movers.

At the first time point bosses of both movers and joiners seemed happy enough with what was being learned, although they did not significantly correlate learning with any other variable. By the second time point the bosses were clear about who they were beginning to see as strong and weak deliverers. It seemed that by time point two the honeymoon was over and bosses were expecting delivery.

It could be inferred from the data that the SLJs were aware of this, as by the second time point they were focusing on job related tasks. The movers had not changed their focus in the same way. This may account for the fact that at this stage movers and their bosses had different perceptions on the question of their work quality.

Overall, the data collected confirm that within this study the elements of learning that previous researchers have suggested are necessary for organisational socialisation, the 'culture' elements, are what the SLJs and movers are learning.

This study has gone some way to supporting the findings of Ostroff and Kozlowski (1992) in their analysis of content domains. It has, however, slightly extended their findings. This study has found that SLJs learn different cultural aspects from movers. It has also found that what SLJs are learning changes over time. This latter finding points in the direction of supporting stage models of OS.

Drawing all the evidence of this study together, it is legitimate to state that learning in relation to organisational socialisation should be considered an ongoing and necessary part of an individual's career.

The following chapter looks at the data in relation to the organisational players, aiming to identify which individuals or groups of people are key in helping the SLJ fit in to the new organisation and how these stakeholders' views may change over time. The experiences of the SLJs are compared with those of movers. Data relating to the bosses' view of who is influential in the OS of SLJs and movers are also analysed.



Capability	Support	Attitude	Adjustment	Inclusion	Values	Behaviours	Change	Acceptance	Learning	Initiation	Expectation	Quality	Effort	Challenge	Guidance	Workload	Effectiveness	Pace		
Capability	1.0																			
Support	.410	1.0																		
Attitude	-.347	-.039	1.0																	
Adjustment	.647*	.711*	-.157	1.0																
Inclusion	-.320	-.483	.270	-.561	1.0															
Values	.396	.594	.033	.562	-.504	1.0														
Behaviours	.149	.265	-.523	.111	-.251	.072	1.0													
Change	.364	.611*	-.291	.586	-.451	.196	.279	1.0												
Acceptance	-.381	-.314	.427	-.559	.618*	-.134	-.293	-.480	1.0											
Learning	.126	.114	-.309	.170	-.056	-.006	.576	.126	-.006	1.0										
Initiation	-.044	-.099	.196	-.049	.093	-.121	-.291	-.186	.204	.379	1.0									
Expectation	.774*	.514	-.268	.614*	-.179	.115	.085	.472	-.388	.151	.245	1.0								
Quality	.331	.170	-.011	.326	-.334	-.085	.270	-.079	-.544	.169	.065	.390	1.0							
Effort	-.284	-.089	.022	-.036	-.065	-.237	.192	.258	-.231	.282	-.007	-.192	.091	1.0						
Challenge	-.107	-.515	-.037	-.298	.512	-.527	.131	-.278	-.018	.310	.056	-.153	.139	.135	1.0					
Guidance	-.009	.196	-.165	.379	-.343	.185	.131	.441	-.484	-.160	-.214	.158	.005	.111	-.413	1.0				
Workload	.142	-.084	.237	-.087	.194	.238	.378	.378	.094	.154	-.282	.039	-.339	.094	-.062	.261	1.0			
Effectiveness	.197	.344	-.139	.427	-.237	.211	.294	.205	-.574	.203	-.093	.277	.444	.026	.013	.526	-.086	1.0		
Initiative	-.433	-.230	.343	-.368	.025	-.096	-.343	-.169	-.010	-.692	-.331	-.451	-.118	.341	-.184	.070	-.102	-.229	1.0	
Pace	-.235	.006	-.136	-.060	.158	-.010	-.076	-.008	-.233	-.142	-.121	-.082	-.100	.027	-.018	.415	-.283	.374	.092	1.0

TABLE 28: PEARSON'S CORRELATION SLJs, TIME POINT ONE

N=17



Capability	Support	Attitude	Adjustment	Inclusion	Value	Behaviour	Change	Acceptance	Learning	Initiation	Expectation	Quality	Challenge	Guidance	Workload	Effectiveness	Initiative	Pace
1.0																		
Support	.150	1.0																
Attitude	-.110	-.615	1.0															
Adjustment	.117	.022	.488	1.0														
Inclusion	-.061	-.304	.222	-.073	1.0													
Values	.126	-.312	-.094	-.186	-.080	1.0												
Behaviours	.078	.688*	-.621	-.114	-.434	-.300	1.0											
Change	.225	.752*	-.621	-.117	-.007	-.400	.549	1.0										
Acceptance	-.499	-.366	.400	-.202	.599	-.208	-.369	-.306	1.0									
Learning	.252	-.416	.416	.081	.582	-.254	-.500	.026	.472	1.0								
Initiation	.235	-.004	-.097	-.538	.163	.294	-.157	-.036	.110	.158	1.0							
Expectation	.587	.178	-.127	.258	-.116	-.098	.126	.332	-.468	.215	-.036	1.0						
Quality	.468	.190	.089	.285	-.325	-.235	.490	.053	-.424	-.147	-.002	.318	1.0					
Effort	-.406	.381	-.270	-.327	.119	-.427	.412	.539	.183	-.164	-.163	-.213	-.233	1.0				
Challenge	.271	-.036	.353	.240	-.502	-.082	.162	-.189	-.178	.082	.013	.206	.528	-.345	1.0			
Guidance	-.064	-.026	.064	-.172	.375	.357	-.112	-.053	.153	-.047	.543	-.069	.023	-.099	-.002	1.0		
Workload	-.163	-.045	-.162	-.004	.112	-.380	.076	.225	-.161	.037	-.339	.061	-.082	.362	-.378	-.311	1.0	
Effectiveness	.196	.320	-.235	.481	.052	-.398	.370	.277	-.264	.056	-.368	.262	.383	-.137	-.083	-.264	.423	1.0
Initiative	-.506	-.184	-.096	-.396	-.224	-.035	.136	-.039	.347	-.054	.082	-.130	-.183	.275	-.093	-.108	-.048	-.344
Pace	.437	.153	-.032	.320	-.162	.033	.348	.172	-.388	-.099	-.067	.482	.343	-.144	.382	.225	-.138	-.222
																		1.0

TABLE 29: PEARSON'S CORRELATION, SLJs TIME POINT TWO

N=17



	Capa bility	Supp ort	Attitu de	Adjus tment	Inclus ion	Value s	Beha viours	Chan ge	Acce ptanc e	Learn ing	Initiati on	Expe ctatio n	Qualit y	Effort	Chall enge	Guida nce	Workl oad	Effect iveness	Initiati ve	Pace
Capability	1.0																			
Support	.185	1.0																		
Attitude	-.115	.255	1.0																	
Adjustment	.066	.524	-.128	1.0																
Inclusion	-.288	-.538	-.082	-.242	1.0															
Values	-.026	.229	.415	.247	-.072	1.0														
Behaviours	.131	.548	.541	.383	-.370	.479	1.0													
Change	-.537	.297	-.025	.328	-.057	-.227	.178	1.0												
Acceptance	-.019	-.251	-.111	-.303	.030	-.264	-.199	-.200	1.0											
Learning	-.130	-.287	.011	-.513	.132	-.173	-.291	-.213	.921*	1.0										
Initiation	-.118	-.109	-.175	.145	.399	-.032	-.242	.212	.208	.169	1.0									
Expectation	.207	.490	-.208	.438	-.348	-.133	.165	.280	-.072	-.115	-.021	1.0								
Quality	.339	.158	-.021	.288	-.075	-.448	.149	.172	.080	-.131	-.046	.240	1.0							
Effort	-.495	-.174	-.045	-.235	-.285	-.342	-.195	.287	.073	.079	-.289	-.232	.021	1.0						
Challenge	.143		.241	-.103	.194	.371	.018	-.302		.105	.394	-.197	-.099	-.484	1.0					
Guidance	.246	.118	-.189	.261	-.182	-.403	-.382	-.007	-.008	-.098	-.011	.152	.478	.318	-.318	1.0				
Workload	.191	.081	-.146	.107	-.391	-.429	.077	.372	.157	-.001	.208	-.031	.300	.263	-.316	.243	1.0			
Effectiveness	.064	.430	-.098	.463	-.528	-.060	.311	.593	-.325	-.419	-.222	.445	.463	.325	-.451	.365	.429	1.0		
Initiative	-.358	-.449	-.003	-.224	.066	.023	-.078	-.069	.578	.620*	-.092	-.133	-.290	.121	-.029	-.352	.006	-.277	1.0	
Pace	-.030	.006	-.126	.119	.122	.085	-.054	-.062	.484	.554	.207	.388	.002	-.161	.216	.076	-.298	-.113	.362	1.0

TABLE 30: PEARSON'S CORRELATION, MOVERS TIME POINT ONE

N=17







Capability	Support	Attitude	Adjustment	Inclusion	Values	Behaviours	Change	Acceptance	Learning	Initiation	Expectation	Quality	Effort	Challenge	Guidance	Workload	Effectiveness	Pace		
Capability	1.0																			
Support	.206	1.0																		
Attitude	-.421	-.119	1.0																	
Adjustment	-.159	.051	-.339	1.0																
Inclusion	-.306	-.544	.382	-.094	1.0															
Values	-.342	-.146	.318	-.176	.085	1.0														
Behaviours	.197	.242	-.483	.028	-.385	-.194	1.0													
Change	.237	.224	-.198	.119	-.212	-.209	.181	1.0												
Acceptance	-.210	.144	.104	-.315	.392	-.084	-.073	-.340	1.0											
Learning	-.085	-.358	.125	.268	.415	.055	-.149	-.330	.170	1.0										
Initiation	.077	-.126	.159	-.178	.506	-.265	-.164	-.310	.583	.454	1.0									
Expectation	.371	.295	-.254	-.139	-.624	.348	.367	.314	-.485	-.392	-.591	1.0								
Quality	.285	.503	-.303	-.009	-.529	.165	.449	.583	-.163	-.409	-.411	.705*	1.0							
Effort	-.336	-.239	-.010	.379	.309	-.325	.004	-.495	.202	.250	.164	-.719	-.583	1.0						
Challenge	.117	-.049	.122	-.173	.464	.063	-.148	-.587	.511	.421	.577	-.328	-.256	.261	1.0					
Guidance	.334	.423	-.083	-.136	-.566	-.313	.288	.362	.073	-.360	.076	.275	.373	-.364	-.330	1.0				
Workload	-.095	-.519	-.001	.249	.363	.043	-.109	-.082	-.335	.420	-.182	-.228	-.333	.280	.209	-.674	1.0			
Effectiveness	.237	.501	-.412	.148	-.499	.155	.591	.483	-.234	-.400	-.410	.726*	.935*	-.465	-.235	.262	1.000	1.0		
Initiative	-.345	-.224	.178	.059	.360	-.302	-.249	-.614	.322	.198	.368	-.772	-.770	.848*	.367	-.281	.144	-.716	1.0	
Pace	.007	.010	-.038	-.161	.197	-.182	.159	-.182	.709*	.495	.429	-.330	.035	.237	.468	.068	-.104	-.090	.202	1.0

TABLE 32: PEARSON'S CORRELATION, SLJs' BOSSES, TIME POINT ONE

N = 17



	Capa bility	Supp ort	Attitu de	Adjust ment	Inclus ion	Value s	Beha viours	Chan ge	Accep tance	Learni ng	Initiati on	Expec tation	Qualit y	Effort	Chall enge	Guida nce	Workl oad	Effecti veness	Initiati ve	Pace
Capability	1.0																			
Support	.526	1.0																		
Attitude	-.293	-.326	1.0																	
Adjustment	.398	.205	-.148	1.0																
Inclusion	.043	-.358	.319	.040	1.0															
Values	.116	-.469	.358	.146	.514	1.0														
Behaviours	.062	.292	-.190	.135	-.204	-.509	1.0													
Change	.333	.500	-.288	.211	-.106	-.348	.064	1.0												
Acceptance	-.253	-.249	-.024	-.650	.343	-.272	.092	-.227	1.0											
Learning	-.315	-.339	.228	-.275	.135	.048		-.523	.347	1.0										
Initiation	-.536	-.225	.142	-.259	.197	-.006	.093	-.077	.185	.405	1.0									
Expectation	.498	.646*	-.550	.050	-.328	-.427	.288	.659*	-.186	-.302	-.266	1.0								
Quality	.374	.479	-.254	.014	-.100	-.013	.280	.303	-.277	-.501	-.383	.672*	1.0							
Effort	-.169	-.121	-.072	-.193	-.397	-.463	.376	-.435	.233	.264	-.049	-.228	-.286	1.0						
Challenge	-.342	-.499	.687*	-.008	.576	.267	-.275	-.460	.209	.365	.280	-.701	-.546	.140	1.0					
Guidance	.217	-.147	-.377	.388	.162	.119	-.142	.162	.088	.123	-.186	.118	-.211	-.348	-.124	1.0				
Workload	-.476	-.346	-.126	.142	-.261	-.213	-.024	-.212	-.049	.003	.076	-.473	-.407	.546	.231	-.029	1.0			
Effectiveness	.623*	.737*	-.579	.189	-.319	-.303	.370	.571	-.253	-.310	-.362	.919*	.718*	-.260	-.808	.162	1.000	1.0		
Initiative	-.355	-.369	.314	.217	.242	-.090	-.007	-.158	.243	.268	.113	-.662	-.672	.291	.521	.162	.489	-.598	1.0	
Pace	-.077	-.337	-.042	.465	.150	.096	.037	.317	-.152	.066	.316	-.199	-.471	-.182	.065	.453	.303	-.200	.489	1.0

TABLE 33: PEARSON'S CORRELATION, SLJs' BOSSES, TIME POINT TWO

N=17



## CHAPTER NINE: WHO IS MOST INFLUENTIAL IN THE OS PROCESS?

The question of stakeholders in OS (apart from the newcomer) has been discussed in Chapter Three. Recapping on this: the players identified in previous studies are the newcomer's boss, experienced colleagues who form the newcomer's peer group, co-workers and staff, the organisation, and various others (for example mentors).

The OS model proposed in Chapter Five was developed with the expectation that it would be found that OS is an interactive process involving the stakeholders listed above.

### Stakeholders and SLJs

Data analysis showed evidence of OS as an interactive process. The following sections consider stakeholder influence in OS from the perspectives of the SLJs and their bosses, and the movers and their bosses. Any differences between the two time points are highlighted.

### The boss and the SLJ

From the data it appears that in the first few weeks in their role SLJs look to their immediate boss to provide personal support, a shoulder to lean on. Personal support takes a variety of forms, but one key factor is feedback on how things are going. SLJs noted that a new joiner is reliant on having a good boss: someone who will help them enter the organisation and encourage them in the new role:

My line manager is very good at feedback and has taken time to say I'm bringing a fresh outlook to the role, which was what they were looking for. (Ed)

... (boss) has been extremely supportive, doing what he can when everyone else has had too much else to concentrate on. (Pete)

In the absence of boss support new joiners appear to flounder and lose their way. The two people in the SLJ group whose recruiting bosses were unavailable in the early weeks both left BA within a year (although any connection between the two events would need to be proven).

Six months later SLJs appeared less needy of personal support from their bosses and more inclined to view them as someone who will position them in BA, acting almost as the champion of the SLJ. It is notable that SLJs are aware that in order to be championed they must earn the confidence of their boss:

x does well as a boss. He's very involving and has given me exposure. (Alan)

Feedback from around the patch gave x the confidence to trust me. (Ian)

It appears that the SLJ understands when there is an issue around the boss's confidence in him:

My manager has ideas that don't agree with my ideas. (Bev)

My immediate boss has been very nice to me but has not provided the leadership or guidance I would have expected. (Fred)

A stakeholder group who were not mentioned in time point one - superior groups or individuals (other than the line manager) - were mentioned in time point two. It seemed that as SLJs worked themselves into the role the importance of influencing and managing upwards became relevant (and sometimes crucial):

Superior groups have taken longer to form a view of me. They are doing a more robust and rigorous assessment of me. Some of that is about frequency of exposure I have to them. (Zak)



## **The peer group and the SLJ**

In time point one SLJs looked to peers (others at the same grade, but not necessarily people who were involved in the same work) for social support. One of the disadvantages, noted by those working at Head Office, was the lack of after-hours socialising. This was mainly due to the geographic location of the building. For people to feel welcome when they joined BA it appeared that they needed to feel socially included by peers:

I was interviewed by ... they gave good vibes to the rest of the peer team. (Sam)

They've invited me to various social things - I feel I'm being easily accepted into my peer group. (Alan)

My peer group has gone out of their way to help. They've tried to say what all the good things are and worked from this. (Bev)

I've had a brilliant welcome from ... (names of people in peer group). (Kev)

The reverse of feeling welcomed was the feeling of being either tested or isolated and this was a source of concern for SLJs:

I asked for comments and response and got the impression there was an underlying current of 'we're going to disagree' because I don't know enough about the airline. (Bob)

With my peer group some testing of me is taking place. BA is more testing of individuals than other environments I've worked in. It's a kind of 'Let's see what you can bring here. Let's see if you come up to scratch'. (Ed)

My peers I've never seen which makes it difficult, they're not used to people coming in from the outside. (Tom)

The way that people were included and accepted by peers reflects in the significant correlation in time point one between these two variables  $r=.618$  ( $p<0.01$ ). (See Table 28 at the end of Chapter Eight.)

By the second time point SLJs seemed to be clear about whether or not they were accepted or were still being tested. One of the prerequisites of being accepted seemed to be that the SLJ had to have gained the trust of his peers, but it was not quite clear what had to be done to win trust:

There is a need for the network to show approval before someone is accepted and trusted. (Ian)

Sideways feedback from my peers will help my boss and colleagues trust me. (Babs)

I think in BA once you're accepted you get a compounding effect. Once you're over the barrier it's ok. It took me three months. There was a rite of passage to be gone through before being accepted. (Mike)

30% of SLJs agreed either moderately or strongly in time point two that they had been put through what could be called an initiation test (compared with 6% in time point one). What was perceived as an initiation test was not the 'head in lavatory pan' type of one-off trial, but more of a 'proving that you're a safe pair of hands, capable of handling certain projects'. When people did not feel accepted there were some painful descriptions of what it felt like to have failed the test:

They agree and then do something different. It's a terrible culture where people never upset someone to their face but then go out and undermine them. (Lynn)

They aren't going to tell you if they've decided that they don't like you. You just keep bumping into walls. (Pete)

In terms of fitting in socially there isn't an initiation test - it's a much longer drawn-out process - it's a slow torture rather than a brief period of abuse. (Dan)

### **SLJs' co-workers and staff**

In relation to their boss and their peers SLJs initially felt they needed to gain the trust of these individuals and prove they could add value. In relation to their co-workers and to the staff that they managed SLJs needed to validate their roles as leaders and managers. This was felt to be a positive experience where they were welcomed by their new workgroups. Again it felt harder where they felt they were being tested:

The team I've come to manage felt leaderless - they've been wonderfully supportive. (Zak)

Managers are encouraging me to change things. They appreciate what I will bring to the company and to the change programme. (Kim)

People are expecting a lot of me, which makes me feel important. My team has been very good. (Sue)

There's been some who are getting ready to flex their muscles - 'We'll give her a warm-up period'. Mainly the people I would line manage. (Bev)

I inherited four managers. One has been more suspicious than the others, asking questions like 'What are you going to contribute to the business?' (Bob)

SLJs seemed to be realistically aware of the responses of their workgroups and staff, viewing as natural the qualms and anxieties people might be feeling about having a new manager:



People have to develop trust in you. It's not an instant thing. (Zak)

Human nature is about relationships - they take time to build. I can't claim I've been shut out. (Ed)

Whenever you come into an organisation you have to prove you're a safe pair of hands. (Alan)

Six months into the role, where the trust and confidence building had worked, SLJs were reporting:

At the start it took me time to win over some of my team's belief in my abilities.<sup>11</sup> They were implicitly asking the question 'What value can you add?' By the middle of the second quarter I'd proved I could add value. (Kim)

Once you've demonstrated ability and credibility you can gain trust and comfort. (Ian)

Where it had not worked, people again noted the feeling of being isolated and cut out rather than being given a clear statement saying things weren't going well:

You get embraced quickly as lip service and then shunned. (Dan)

I can feel some intransigence amongst some people but they're not saying anything. (Sam)

### **The SLJ and the organisation**

As they entered BA the SLJs observed many of the cultural characteristics that have been described in Chapter Five. However, what struck several of them was the disconnection between what they had seen of BA from a customer or outsider perspective and what as insiders they found it to be. (This point has also been mentioned in Chapter One.)

It can be very difficult to get recruited into BA. From this I expected it to be a smoother running machine than it is. (Babs)

BA has a strong brand image - but how do they do it? (Lynn)

There's no vision of what are the values and beliefs of BA. I thought there would be from what I'd seen as a passenger. (Tom)

Six months into the role the observations were being recorded as felt experiences with tones of frustration evident from many informants:

BA is not a change culture. There's no feeling of any sense of urgency about the problems and issues. Nice organisations like this don't make tough decisions easily. (Sue)

I haven't broken into the culture yet. It's an old boys' network in a conservative organisation and a pretty political one at that. (Pete)

BA tries to change people in a very subtle way. No one will tell you to conform but there is an attempt to cut out passion, challenge and non status quo. I feel I want to scream because no one else is. (Mike)

This sense of frustration is likely to be one of the factors that contribute to a fairly high proportion of SLJs leaving BA within a short time period. As noted nine (29%) of the SLJs from the combined pilot and full study group, a total of thirty-one people, had left BA within a two-year period of joining. This compared with an average rate of turnover among senior managers of 15% in the same period.



It is possible that this sense of frustration develops from a lack of clarity about their role in changing the culture of BA. As the culture map shows (Chapter Five) there was recognition that the current culture of BA was unlikely to deliver the business strategy. There was a clear recognition at the GM level that the culture needed to be different. Comments from the SLJs suggested that several had been brought in to effect culture change, but had felt thwarted in their efforts and subtly pressured into conformity with the current BA culture.

I think you become more accepting of the constraints to change. In the beginning you are more naively prepared to question and challenge. After a while you become subconsciously and consciously self-screening. The vision narrows to the art of the possible at BA. (Kev)

### **The SLJ and others**

Beyond those already noted, other stakeholders were rarely referred to by SLJs as influential in their organisational socialisation at the entry period. (One informant described an 'inplacement' experience as being very valuable).

Six months later the role of coaches and mentors was being discussed. The few (five) people who had been allocated an internal mentor, and for whom such a relationship had worked, felt it to be beneficial. Others noted the problems with keeping such a relationship going when people were under time pressures. From this point of view there was a feeling that an external mentor might be a better deal than an internal one because people on both sides felt more obligated to develop and continue the relationship.

### **What the SLJs' bosses said about stakeholders in the OS process**

From the start SLJs', bosses were looking to see if they have recruited someone who delivered effectively on the job. In the first few weeks they saw the sense of helping the SLJ enter BA, but very quickly they focused on aspects of interaction that help or hinder

delivery. This is evident both from what bosses said and the ratings they gave on the questionnaire items.

At the first time point there was significant correlation between effectiveness and expectation  $r=.726$  ( $p<0.01$ ), between effectiveness and quality  $r=.935$  ( $p<0.01$ ), and between initiative and effort  $r=.848$  ( $p<0.01$ ). (See Table 32 at the end of Chapter Eight.) In contrast the SLJs themselves did not speak about effectiveness; nor did their questionnaire rankings show any items significantly correlating with effectiveness.

By the second time point SLJ's bosses were showing significant correlation between effectiveness and capability  $r= .623$  ( $p<0.01$ ) and effectiveness and support,  $r=.737$  ( $p<0.01$ ). (See Table 33 at the end of Chapter Eight.) As with time point one SLJs did not have the same focus on effectiveness.

Beyond this, what the boss said in relation to stakeholder interaction endorsed what the SLJ said. Bosses were aware of their own role in the OS process at both time points, and appeared similarly au fait with the SLJs' interactions with other stakeholder groups. The following sections discuss in more detail the SLJs' bosses' perspectives on the SLJ interactions with stakeholders.

### **The boss and the SLJ**

In the early weeks bosses were noting both the need their SLJ had for personal support and their responsibility for positioning the SLJ in the organisation. (It is perhaps surprising that the SLJs themselves did not acknowledge the role their boss played in this positioning.)

<p>I hope I've been supportive. In his first month I had frequent meetings with him and gave him guidance. I took him round with me we built up trust and rapport. He built up confidence. (Fred's boss)</p>
--



People had to know of his existence. I paved the way for him. (Kev's boss)

It was very important for her to have me available and for me to be seen to be standing beside her. I invited her in to meet the teams ahead of her joining. (Bev's boss)

I pre-sold him in. I've got to help package and present him. (Tom's boss)

Within six months, however, bosses tended to have reduced the personal support and did not mention the positioning or championing aspect. But like the SLJs they were, at this stage, looking at how the SLJ was doing in terms of upward management:

You need incredibly good influencing skills if you join as an SM. You need to be able to convince superiors that you can add value and rally people where you have no direct authority. She's beginning to do that. (Lynn's boss)

You need exposure to do work in BA at a level above you. (Bob's boss)

He's good at upward management. He's a nice person to have as a colleague. (Zak's boss)

### **SLJs' peer group**

At the first time point bosses had a good view of what was going on in terms of the SLJs being accepted or rejected by peers, and it was something they appeared to keep an eye on:

He's joined a group of people who all go off and have lunch together. People are friendly and sociable, but slightly cautious at this point. (Mike's boss)

It's likely that people resented him from the day one. His style is not a sensitive one to people. You have to be able to pick up vibes in BA. (Dan's boss)

People see her as a bit insular but she's been well accepted as a member of the group.  
(Babs's boss)

Colleagues are all trying to help her find her bearings. It's not a big issue at this stage, but I've noticed some people not on the same wavelength as her. (Lynn's boss)

This observation of interaction with peers continued in time point two, but the slant was slightly different. Here the comments were more focused on the SLJ's impact on his peers than at time point one when comments were the other way round:

She has to prove to her colleagues that she adds value. She needs to be communicating across and down. (Sue's boss)

We kept offering help and he didn't seem to want it. (Dan's boss)

Getting colleagues outside the department to do stuff he's had less success with than getting people within the department to do stuff. (Bob's boss)

You have to earn the respect of your peers. He's constantly looking for opportunities to improve the department. (Fred's boss)

Bosses did not comment on the testing and initiation that several of the SLJs felt they were being subjected to. It may be that the feelings provoked in the newcomer by this form of interaction are kept hidden from bosses.

### **SLJ's co-workers and staff**

Because bosses were deeply concerned with whether or not the SLJ would deliver effectively their comments tended to reveal a preoccupation with this question. In time



point one the SLJs were concerned with the validation of their role as manager, and bosses noted the ways the SLJ went about this as an indicator of whether or not they were going to be able to deliver:

I need someone who'll get respect and challenge right. He was very clear he wanted to spend time with his staff, which I think he needed to do if he is to get them performing.

(Ian's boss)

He's getting incredibly negative feedback from his team. His people skills are a big issue.

I'm worried he's not going to be able to deliver. (Dan's boss)

He gave up time and invested socially in the team - pub, supper. Geographically it has been easy to make connections with him. I think he'll do well. (Zak's boss)

You earn acceptance by working with people who are your team. He has had to earn the right to be accepted through his activities and behaviours. You self-select or deselect and if you deselect you can't deliver. (Alan's boss)

By time point two bosses were clear about whether the SLJ was confident in doing the new role and had won the support of his team. They were quick to recognise the skills needed to do this:

There's been a bit of him versus his management team. He has had problems with collegiate responsibility but is getting to grips with it now. (Pete's boss)

His skills are huge. His team-mates have been very supportive. If someone were going to get pushback in a role it would have been him. He's developed a strong network. (Tom's boss)

You've got three months while people circle around you and then they make up their mind

- he's through the worst now and is doing fine. (Ed's boss)

Some of her staff have been a pain in the backside. She's had to forge her way and she's done this by being approachable and forthcoming. (Lynn's boss)



## **The SLJ and the organisation**

In time point one SLJs were observing the organisation and in time point two they were experiencing it. Bosses understood this, and in time point one appeared to be observing the organisation almost through the eyes of the SLJ:

We're not a confrontational culture. (Sam's boss)

We do tend to treat everyone as a line manager. There's no recognition for specialists.  
(Mike's boss)

Our espoused values are not always our values in use. (Kim's boss)

I'm not sure BA has the confidence to cope with mavericks - a reasonable degree of conformity is required. (Kev's boss)

Similarly in time point two bosses appeared to empathise with some of the cultural issues:

He's been given entrance to Compass Centre car park - the ultimate test of being accepted! (Bob's boss)

It's hard to gain your spurs here - BA works on networks. (Ian's boss)

He finds it a very frustrating organisation in terms of getting decisions made and the length of time to get things done, as we all do. (Kev's boss)

We want clones. People are damned for being different. We don't tolerate real diversity - those who deliver are good for the organisation even if they are different. I'd like to see more tolerance. (Kim's boss)

## **The SLJ and others**

The only other stakeholders bosses mentioned were mentors, and their comments confirmed the SLJs' conversations on this topic.

## **Stakeholders and movers**

Movers interact with the same range of stakeholders as SLJs. However the nature of their interactions appears different. It may be because of their organisational background and knowledge, as well as the fact that they are trading to some extent as known quantities, that movers' interactions seem to be less focused and conscious than SLJs'. It may be because 'when individuals are new to an organisation they may seek information in a far more deliberate manner than when they have grown accustomed to their organisational environment' (Miller and Jablin, 1991:94). Movers appear less interested in being championed. They say less about the hard business edge of their role, and they appear less driven in their work.

On the question of initiation, 29% of movers report that they have been put through what could be called an initiation test in time point one, and 6% report this in time point two. This is an almost exact inversion of the experience of the SLJ group. The relevant comments suggest that movers felt that they were being tested on joining by the teams they were managing. SLJs, on the other hand, felt that it was their boss who had given them a huge task to achieve in their early weeks and that in retrospect this felt like an initiation test.

## **The boss and the movers**

In discussing interactions in time point one, movers make very little reference to their bosses. They imply that the bosses are available to guide if needed, but it is evident that



the bosses are not as necessary to the mover's entry to the new role as they are to the joiner's:

Whenever I need guidance or clarification I can talk to ... She's very visible and available.

(Cath)

I never see my manager - he's totally hands off. (Fran)

In the meetings six months later movers' bosses had become even more shadowy. There was no suggestion that movers thought of their bosses as integral to their career success.

Unlike the SLJs movers, at neither time point, mention the need to be visible to more senior staff in the wider organisation. The notions of influencing upward or upward management did not appear in their conversations.

### **Movers' peer groups**

Several of the mover informants had joined the BA graduate scheme so that, although they were moving boss and department, they in fact knew many of their peers already. This meant that they faced fewer of the fitting in and testing issues at this level than the SLJs:

I slotted into the team with no apparent problem. It was like going back in time - there were loads of familiar faces. (Jill)

I have a good relationship with the other section heads developed over the years with BA.

(Roger)

When I first joined I had no line manager so the support of the peer group was important.

(Rob)

Six months into the role movers were commenting on what it was like working with their peers. For a number of people the reality was harsher at this point than the initial welcome might have suggested:

It's been a scrappy time with people fighting for territory. (Stan)

At the peer group level people were testing me to see if I was an honest player or whether I was political, self-promoting or over-ambitious. (Rose)

It's much lonelier being an SM, there's much less of a community than at MG level. (Luke)

And movers noted some of the problems with day-to-day interactions:

I think some of my colleagues should be more critical than they are. (Julie)

I've come under pressure from peers to change my blunt approach. (Gina)

It's often difficult to get my peer group to own and direct the vision rather than criticising what I'm trying to do. (Paul)

Again this is an interesting reversal of the experience of the SLJs, who experienced the difficulties on entry to BA and were gradually able to build the welcome and acceptance. It may be that movers assumed (and felt) welcome and then did not make a similar effort to build this into a good working relationship.

### **Movers' co-workers and staff**

With their co-workers and the teams that they managed, movers took the view that it would take a while for things to bed down. They viewed this as part of the way things were (perhaps because they had experienced this in BA themselves):



My team may have been apprehensive waiting to see what my management style would be. (Mark)

People have asked 'what's he going to do to us?' There's been a bit of holding cards close to their chests till they felt they could trust me. (Paul)

People test you - there is a proving period. People see how you perform. (Cath)

At the second time point movers were trying a range of techniques to help get their teams to perform. Given that the majority of movers had been promoted into the new role it is not surprising that there is some feeling of manager experimentation (which squares with the questions discussed in Chapter Eight, about the differences expected in performance between one grade and the next higher grade):

I need to add value to team's work rather than doing the tasks myself. I need to take more strategic and thinking time. (Jen)

People tolerate mistakes and are prepared to offer advice. We sit together here and form a cohesive group. (Greg)

My role depends on matrix management. It's not as easy to drive performance from here as it would be if they were all reporting to me. (Jill)

I need to gain people's respect when the situation demands it. (Gina)

As their manager I need to take responsibility for brokering discussions having established trust and rapport first. (Rose)

## **The mover and the organisation**

Movers made very few comments, either at time point one or at time point two, about the wider organisation culture. It seemed that when they reflected on the culture, they did so at a department level. They compared their new department with their previous one. This may be because the wider organisational culture was one with which they were comfortable and familiar, and so they may have stopped noticing it.

Six months in they did comment at an organisational level on the difficulties they experienced with both the bureaucracy of the organisation and the short term thinking they were subjected too. Both features were sources of frustration to the movers as they tried to get the job done:

It would be advantageous to look further out in time. I get frustrated at the level of detail and the short- term perspective. (Rob)

The bureaucracy of the organisation is a nightmare. It's all wading through treacle. (Max)

## **The mover and others**

At both time points movers commented more than SLJs on the value that mentoring might bring. This may have been because they were less able, or less likely, to consider their boss as a source of support and advice. For the most part the value of having a mentor was a perceived value as none of them actually had one in the new role. However, they were able to contact people who had either held the role before them or who knew enough about it to offer support and advice from a neutral position.

Two of the movers mentioned that they had got the new roles as an outcome of BA's succession planning process, so these two felt that their careers were being managed by an organisational other:



I was well career managed. I didn't feel sidelined or forgotten. I felt there was a body of people managing my career. (Rick)

### **What the movers' bosses said about stakeholders**

Like the bosses of the SLJs the movers' bosses indicated that in the early days they were comfortable with the mover finding his feet. But by the six-month point they were looking for effective delivery. Movers' bosses seemed to have a good feel for what their new staff member was going through, but took quite a different role in the relationship from SLJs' bosses.

### **The boss and the mover**

Movers and their bosses tended to have a less close or regular relationship than SLJs and their bosses during the mover's first weeks in role. Movers' bosses tended to treat the mover from the outset as if he/she was a regular member of their team:

I'm here and available if she wants to come and see me. (Judy's boss)

I have a 90-minute meeting with him every other week + team meetings as I do with other in my team. (Stan's boss)

All my direct reports have regular updates between 2 and 6 weeks - most see me every 3 weeks. (Jen's boss)

Six months later this had not changed, although at this point some bosses commented on concerns about their own performance in relation to the mover:

People have been supportive except for me. I've left him to get on with it, which can't be the best thing for him. (Luke's boss)

I don't think I gave him a good enough induction to the role. (Paul's boss)

We don't manage each other effectively. I'm dismissive sometimes of her viewpoints.

(Rose's boss)

It's very distressing the way people work down a level or two. I'm guilty of trying to do aspects of his job on occasion. (Mark's boss)

### **Movers' peer group**

Most movers' bosses did not specifically comment on how the mover was fitting in with his peer group. The general view was reflected in one comment that:

Colleagues would soon let you know if you're not up to the job. In this environment you can't get by with a lot of bull. (Fran's boss)

### **Movers' co-workers and staff**

Bosses did, however, comment on what they had noticed about the mover and his team. So it seemed that, although bosses were 'hands off' in terms of interacting with the mover in time point one, they were nevertheless aware of how the mover's staff were interacting with him:

People in his team are watching and waiting to see what his style is. (Greg's boss)

I think she's respected but not necessarily supported by her team. (Cath's boss)

People are always discreetly and subtly watching a new person but not necessarily excluding them from the group. (Gina's boss)

He'll take six months to get up to speed on making his team effective. (Max's boss)



It is notable that at this time point there was no correlation in the quantitative data between 'effectiveness' and any other variable. Six months into the role the picture had changed somewhat. Movers' bosses, like SLJs' bosses, were by this stage looking for the mover to deliver. In the quantitative data collected three variables correlated significantly with effectiveness: capability  $r = .667 (p < 0.01)$ , support  $r = .737 (p < 0.01)$  and quality  $r = .652 (p < 0.01)$ . (See Tables 36 and 37 at the end of this chapter for movers' bosses' correlation matrices.) Additionally the bosses were implying the need for assertive team management to get staff delivering:

I think team building is an ongoing thing. He needs to actively support his team and accept good days and bad days. (Rick's boss)

She's very protective of her team. She needs to give them more push. (Julie's boss)

### **Movers and the organisation**

Very few bosses commented on the movers' interactions with the wider organisation. Unlike the SLJs' bosses, who felt some responsibility for championing their new staff member and helping him become visible in the organisation, the movers' bosses were silent on this. They appeared to take a more passive view, feeling that it was up to the mover to take responsibility for managing their visibility. As one boss commented:

BA has a large management population jostling for position. She needs to prove her value to the organisation. (Jill's boss)

### **Movers and others**

Perhaps because the bosses were hands off, several of them felt that their movers would find either a coach or mentor to develop their performance levels. On the one hand this could be interpreted as an abdication of management responsibility, on the other hand as a valid method of using a neutral party to help develop someone's skills.

Summary

The preceding discussion has disclosed that SLJs and movers have somewhat different OS experiences, but are interacting with the same groups of stakeholders in their role. It is evident that for both SLJs and movers there is clear OS activity. This activity is commented on in terms of two-way interactions.

It is also evident that the OS process is time related. What is being noted and commented on in the first time point is different from that in the second, but the change in focus is still related to fitting in and getting on. The table below presents a summary of what the SLJ or mover is doing in relation to each stakeholder group in each time period:

TABLE 34: SLJ AND MOVER INTERACTIONS WITH ORGANISATIONAL OTHERS

	SLJs in time 1 are:	SLJs in time 2 are:	Movers in time 1 are:	Movers in time 2 are:
Boss	Receiving personal support	Being championed	Asking for support as needed	Asking for support as needed
Peer group	Developing social support	Mutually trusting	Being welcomed	Challenging each other
Superiors (beyond boss)	-	Influencing upwards	-	-
Workgroup staff	Validating skills in role	Delivering in role	Getting buy in to way of managing	Adding value to team's work
Organisation	Observing organisation culture	Experiencing organisation culture	Comparing new department culture with previous	Fighting bureaucracy and short termism
Others	Being mentored (some)	Tapping into network	Getting support from previous role incumbents	Tapping into network

One of the most striking features of the overall discussion is the way the SLJs and movers evidence greater concern about fitting in i.e. being accepted by other people in the organisation, than about getting on, i.e. performing effectively on the job. Conversely the bosses are more concerned about the getting on, i.e. performance aspects of the SLJ



or mover, than they are about the fitting in aspects (although they seem to be aware that in order to get on the new role holder has to fit in).

As stated, neither the SLJ nor the movers' group quantitative data revealed any significant relationship with effectiveness. The table below summarises the emphasis the bosses of the groups put on this:

**TABLE 35: PEARSON'S CORRELATION OF THE VARIABLES EFFECTIVENESS/OTHER**

SLJs' bosses time point one N= 17		Movers' bosses time point one N=17	
Effectiveness/expectation	.726	-	
Effectiveness/quality	.935		
SLJs' bosses time point two		Movers' bosses time point two	
Effectiveness/capability	.623	Effectiveness/capability	.667
Effectiveness/support	.737	Effectiveness/support	.737
Effectiveness/expectation	.919	-	
Effectiveness/quality	.718		
		Effectiveness/quality	.652

(All correlation co-efficients significant at  $p<.0.01$ )

One of the expectations underpinning the OS model presented in Chapter Five was that OS would be interactive involving a number of players in the process. The data lent strong support to such a view.

The data analysis uncovered evidence that socialisation is part of job change whether the change is with a new organisation or within the same organisation. This goes some way towards confirming another expectation on which the OS model was based: that socialisation is ongoing throughout a person's career.

The evidence that the SLJs and movers are more concerned with fitting in and their bosses more concerned with getting on starts to suggest that for performance to be optimal, both conditions must be fulfilled - a further expectation inherent in the model's design.

Additionally the qualitative comment adds depth and detail to the quantitative data, tentatively confirming the expectation that OS is a process not readily assessable simply by quantitative means.

The following chapter considers the cost to the SLJ of becoming an organisational member.



	Capa bility	Supp ort	Attitu de	Adjus tment	Inclus ion	Value s	Beha viours	Chan ge	Acce ptanc e	Learn ing	Initiati on	Expe ctatio n	Qualit y	Effort	Chall enge	Guida nce	Workl oad	Effect iveness	Initiati on	Pace
Capability	1.0																			
Support	.318	1.0																		
Attitude	-.234	-.166	1.0																	
Adjustment	.174	.182	-.237	1.0																
Inclusion	.180	-.170	.406	-.217	1.0															
Values	-.108	-.113	.567	-.314	.564	1.0														
Behaviours	-.162	.413	-.066	-.167	-.243	-.101	1.0													
Change	.220	.298	-.638	.508	-.542	-.616	-.262	1.0												
Acceptance	.081	-.187	.033	.060	.332	.575	.123	-.358	1.0											
Learning	.066	.039	.556	-.275	.281	.325	-.002	-.412	.231	1.0										
Initiation	.049	.143	-.201	-.262	-.181	-.260	.222	-.064	.001	.506	1.0									
Expectation	.358	.176	-.032	.383	-.214	-.156	.038	.295	-.193	-.390	-.552	1.0								
Quality	.548	.227	-.517	.343	-.127	-.330	-.286	.540	-.105	-.393	-.339	.304	1.0							
Effort	.003	.025	.023	-.184	-.352	.098	-.297	.236	-.101	.111	.078	.003	-.055	1.0						
Challenge	-.302	-.315	.003	-.571	.064	.360	-.294	-.125	.002	.061	.092	-.248	-.199	.535	1.0					
Guidance	-.118	.204	.271	-.195	.247	.326	-.178	.031	-.028	.143	-.357	-.109	.311	.051	.266	1.0				
Workload	-.516	.100	.412	-.261	.021	.260	.197	-.230	-.086	.343	.149	-.006	-.696	.303	.400	.011	1.0			
Effectiveness	.322	.266	-.188	.234	-.365	-.591	-.107	.483	-.630	-.155	-.123	.443	.524	-.009	-.320	.157	1.000	1.0		
Initiative	-.212	-.471	.394	.004	.393	.300	-.087	-.287	.410	.465	.057	-.133	-.539	-.047	.202	-.004	.368	-.372	1.0	
Pace	.360	.160	-.575	.113	-.396	-.270	.227	.296	.385	-.113	.359	-.082	.369	.184	-.023	-.128	-.392	-.087	-.178	1.0

TABLE 36: PEARSON'S CORRELATION MATRIX, MOVERS' BOSSES' TIME POINT ONE

N=17



	Capa bility	Supp ort	Attitu de	Adjust ment	Inclus ion	Value s	Beha viours	Chan ge	Accep tance	Learn ing	Initiati on	Expec tation	Qualit y	Effort	Chall enge	Guida nce	Workl oad	Effecti veness	Initiati on	Pace
Capability	1.0																			
Support	.540	1.0																		
Attitude	-.080	-.234	1.0																	
Adjustment	.500	.174	.340	1.0																
Inclusion	-.409	-.641	.286	-.129	1.0															
Values	-.158	.128	.253	.386	.259	1.0														
Behaviours	-.248	.121	-.516	-.467	.148	-.033	1.0													
Change	.138	.477	-.672	-.239	-.207	.144	.232	1.0												
Acceptance	-.809	-.709	.168	-.186	.410	.186	.164	-.302	1.0											
Learning	-.013	.180	.243	-.142	-.116	.121	-.074	.020		1.0										
Initiation	-.227	-.226	.235	-.012	.122	-.313	-.063	-.330	.368	.108	1.0									
Expectation	.767*	.310	-.050	.370	-.439	-.271	-.182	-.148	-.544	-.337	-.068	1.0								
Quality	.558	.823*	-.210	.077	-.783	-.233	.059	.324	-.575	.111		.418	1.0							
Effort	-.280	-.385	.146	.011	.525	.059	.064	-.445	.173	.035	.008	-.280	-.678	1.0						
Challenge	-.309	.160	-.154	-.241	-.214	-.283	.039	.067	-.027	-.172	.319	-.195	.136	.166	1.0					
Guidance	-.122	-.166	.353	-.271	.189	-.153	-.393	-.158	-.204	.065	.064	-.183	-.073	.018	.298	1.0				
Workload	-.116	-.591	.280	.024	-.040	-.328	-.410	-.543	.432	.136	.201	-.026	-.189	.055	-.233	.079	1.0			
Effectiveness	.667*	.737*	-.190	.276	-.394	.111	.228	.454	-.614	-.009	-.233	.512	.652*	-.554	-.156	-.272	1.000	1.0		
Initiative	.292	.160	.159	.467	.023	.225	-.106	-.211	-.273	-.271	-.480	.067	.062	.313	-.060	-.018	.075	-.013	1.0	
Pace	-.014	-.474	.114	.032	.403	-.463	.050	-.500	.197	-.037	.454	.011	-.403	.667*	.127	-.118	.344	-.393	.097	1.00

TABLE 37: PEARSON'S CORRELATION MATRIX, MOVERS' BOSSES' TIME POINT TWO

N=17



## CHAPTER TEN: WHAT PART DO SLJs PLAY IN THEIR OS?

The OS model presented in Chapter Five predicts four factors to affect performance. The two preceding chapters have discussed two of these: the role context in terms of what the SLJ is learning, and which stakeholders are most influential in the OS process. In both cases the differences that emerge over time have been pointed out. (The relationship between fitting in/getting on and time being the third input in the model.)

The fourth factor that was expected to affect SLJ performance was that of the SLJ himself, specifically the part he plays in the OS process and 'the price of membership'. This aspect (like the three others discussed) has been noted by previous researchers as needing further study in order to extend existing OS knowledge. This is primarily because research studies (with the exception of interactionist models) tend to have been based on the premise that OS was done to the newcomer by the organisation. This perspective neglects to consider the way the SLJ affects his own OS.

The following sections analyse and discuss the data collected around the impact of the SLJ on the OS process. That is, what the SLJs say they need to do is compared with what their bosses say they need to do. As before, job movers' experiences are compared with those of the SLJs and likewise the movers' bosses comments are assessed. Discussions are placed in the two time points of six weeks and six months into role and are considered in relation to five of the six newcomer attributes commonly mentioned in OS literature as necessary for getting on (see Chapter Three), namely:

- An ability to develop ties to co-workers via the establishment of networks, coalitions, and friendships
- The motivation of the newcomer to learn what is needed
- Personal competence in reading situations and getting them right
- Possessing values that match the organisation or are adaptable to them
- Ability of the newcomer to align with the organisation goals and plans

(The sixth attribute, the manner in which the individual learns, has been discussed in the earlier Chapter Eight.) An attribute that previous studies do not mention, but which is uncovered by this study, is the ability of the newcomer to make an impact on the organisation.

**The price of membership to the SLJ**

SLJs in time point one do not speak about being under pressure to change. This is supported by the quantitative data where there is a correlation between the variables change and support,  $r = .611$  ( $p < .01$ ), suggesting that when people feel supported by their colleagues they also feel confirmed in the way they are. (See Table 28 at the end of Chapter Eight for correlation matrices.) Although they talk about a number of aspects of themselves that they have had to change, they view this as a normal part of coming to a new role.

Previous studies regard the ability to develop ties with co-workers via the establishment of networks, coalitions, and friendships, as the primary newcomer attribute necessary for effective OS. SLJs at time point one noted the need to develop networks in order to get things done. They also commented on the time needed to establish these. By time point two they were beginning to feel that they were achieving their aim:

It takes time to find out how to get around and plug in. There's a caucus of people who all know each other and have seen it all before. I'm slowly getting there on this. (Lynn)

To get into the company and get things done you need to go out and interact, talk to lots of people and get to know them. It all takes time. (Bob)

I'm getting through the long process of building a network and gaining parity (probably will take about 3 years). (Dan)



With regard to the second attribute, the motivation of the newcomer to learn what is needed, SLJs' motivation appeared to relate to what they needed to change in order to get the job done. Changes in working practices formed the majority of the comments at this stage:

I'm having to change my working practices quite a lot. (Mike)

I've been told 'there's a certain way of working in BA' - you'll just have to get used to it. (Tom)

I've had some deliberated facilitated discussions with my team about ways of working. (Sue)

By time point two many SLJs had recognised that they needed to change more than their working practices if they were to fit in and get on. They talked about the need to change their style and approach (rather balking at word 'attitude' in the questionnaire) in order to be effective. As in the first time point change is correlated with support,  $r = .752$ , ( $p < 0.01$ ) but unsurprisingly, given their comments, in the second also with attitude,  $r = -.621$  ( $p < 0.01$ ). (See Table 29, at the end of chapter 8, for the correlation matrix showing this.)

The need to be adaptable to the environment was not seen as a negative imposition, but rather the reality of the situation:

I've had to be more assertive and more directive. (Kim)

I take a different style depending on the project I'm working on - sometimes it's content and sometimes it's process. (Bev)

There is a definite culture and a way of doing things. I've got swept up in that with all my good intentions of remaining my own man. I've had to adapt my attitudes a bit. (Kev)

Yes I have changed and adapted as well as BA adapting to me. I came in with some slightly arrogant views. You do have to adapt to the environment. (Fred)

Part of the ability to recognise where and what to adapt comes from the third attribute: that of personal competence in reading situations and getting them right. In the first time point SLJs are approaching the organisation somewhat cautiously:

I'm having to think about changing my approach - adjust my approach to BA and the British culture. (Zak)

I can't come in and start pushing my weight around. If I did the place would shut down on me. (Babs)

I'm having to be careful about how I impact on the culture. I need to understand why people do what they do. (Ed)

By time point two SLJs have recognised where they have read the situation accurately and have found this of value, but they are also starting to make judgements on how much they are prepared to change themselves:

I've recognised where I need to be more autocratic. (Babs)

I have changed my approach but am better for it. (Bob)

I've been brought in to try and ginger things up. I'm not sure I want to change my attitudes. (Ian)

I haven't changed but it would make my life easier if I did. People are not comfortable with me as I'm not regulation BA. (Dan)

In terms of the fourth attribute - possessing values that match the organisation or are adaptable to them - SLJs were aware that there needed to be a value match. Some



people felt that the recruitment and selection process was instrumental in identifying whether this existed:

BA has a set of values and you personally have a set of values and they need to join.

(Alan)

Newcomers need to understand the organisation's values and put them high on the list in the workplace. (Tom)

BA didn't select me for my values, but from my side I selected BA. (Sam)

By the second time point SLJs were commenting on the amount of 'cultural wash' they had encountered and the way it was impacting on their *modus operandi*. What came across in conversations was some feeling of resigned inevitability:

Things slowly start getting to you. " You have to start behaving the way other people behave to get things done. (Lynn)

There's a strong corporate culture but I don't think there's an intent to mould people to it BA doesn't try to change people's values overtly but the way it is people will adapt if they want to get on. (Bev)

Inevitably people who come in with fixed values and beliefs and do not adapt will leave or retain a very isolated position. (Fred)

The need for the values of the individual and the organisation to synchronise is very similar to the attribute noted in the literature of the need for the newcomer to align with the organisation's goals and plans. Within BA this was expressed as needing to do things 'the BA way'. In the first few weeks SLJs did not mention this, but by six months into the job it was a frequently repeated phrase:

BA wants you to believe in the BA way and has a culture that wants you to do this. 'Yes it does try to align people behind this. (Pete)

I do think they try to imbue you with the BA way at a corporate level but it's not a transparent process. (Tom)

When I joined I was told 'we value your experience but you must learn the BA way'. I didn't appreciate what that meant at first. But it's the BA way that you need to get used to. (Babs)

The conversations revealed that the changes were not all one way. There was a lot of pushback, almost a reverse OS from SLJs to the organisation. This is an aspect of OS that was not covered in the literature reviewed:

There are things I think are not acceptable, for example people's ideas of responsibility. They don't take ownership of what needs to be done. Very much a 'someone else's problem' mentality. I'm pushing back on that. (Mike)

There is a sort of 'this is what BA's like'. An unwritten culture that you can't change but I'm urging my people to change. (Zak)

People are too secure in their roles. I've given people clarity on what they have to do. It leads to poor performance otherwise. (Ian)

This pushback is exactly what the bosses feared would be lost if the SLJ learned to be too adaptive to the organisation.

From the dialogues with the SLJs it is evident that they are exhibiting the range of attributes suggested by previous researchers. In practice this means that they are adapting to the organisation to a greater or lesser extent, but there are also indications



that the organisation is adapting to them; the process is thus two-way and interactive. These indications contribute to the expectation inherent in the model that OS is not one-way, from the organisation to the newcomer.

### **How the SLJs' bosses view the impact of the SLJ on the OS process**

SLJs' bosses tended to view the impact of the SLJ in terms of attributes necessary to deliver on the job. Their comments at time point one seemed to point the way forward so there was less obvious development of views by time point two. Nevertheless they talked about the same attributes as the SLJs and in largely the same way.

They noted the need for the SLJ to be able to develop ties with co-workers via the establishment of networks, coalitions, and friendships, and in this regard also felt it important that time should be allocated for this at the point of job entry:

He joined in March and spent most of March meeting people and then started cranking up in April. It was a worthwhile investment of time and a conscious decision on his part to do this. (Fred's boss)

In the first 8 weeks I expected her to network and learn. (Bev's boss)

One SLJ who specifically said he did not have the time to devote to networking left BA within 8 months (although there may not be any cause and effect relationship between the two aspects).

Six months later bosses were commenting less on the development of networks and more on the effect of having developed them (or not). People who were well spoken of by their bosses in terms of networking also tended to be spoken of as those who had skills in using personal power and influence rather than positional power.

Bosses were aware of the negative impact on SLJs entering BA and finding that the job was not the one they thought they had been recruited to do, or that there were more problems inherent in it than had been revealed at the selection process. Where SLJs reported that the job met their expectations it appeared in time point one that they were adjusting well,  $r = .614$  ( $p < 0.01$ ) and showing initiative,  $r = -.451$  ( $p < 0.01$ ). (See Table 28 at the end of Chapter Eight for the correlation matrix showing this.) Bosses, in time point one, reflected a significant correlation between expectation and quality,  $r = .705$  ( $p < 0.01$ ). (See Table 32 at the end of Chapter Eight for the correlation matrix showing this.) Where SLJs failed to come to terms with unmet expectations, the seeds of future problems could be detected:

She's had to adjust her expectations of the role. It's been a frustration to her not doing what she was brought in to do. (Babs's boss)

He's putting in a huge amount of effort but it's not channelled in the right direction. (Pete's boss)

This became more evident at time point two when those whose expectations hadn't been met had made changes and adjusted their expectations, were still coming to terms with things, or else were considering leaving BA altogether:

Why is she still here? My suspicion is that she's determined to make a go of it. She had very high expectations of us, which I don't think we've met. (Lynn's boss)

He's ok so far, but unless he sees a career he'll move on. I can't keep him for more than another 12 months. (Zak's boss)

She's coming to terms with things. I don't think it has met her expectations. She thought we were a more progressive organisation than it proved to be. (Kim's boss)



The bosses' feelings, expressed in time point two, that expectation and change were connected was supported in the quantitative analysis  $r = .659$  ( $p < 0.01$ ). (See Table 33 at the end of Chapter Eight for the correlation matrix showing this.)

Bosses' comments on the SLJs' personal competence in reading situations, and getting them right appeared to be first impression judgements in time point one. At time point two bosses were observing how the SLJ interacted with others:

He's been very professional in pulling us up sharp. He delivers input and feedback in a constructive way. (Sam's boss)

He knows how to handle situations in various ways. (Tom's boss)

He needs to change his style. An abrasive style gives rise to problems. The style and the way to gain support in this large bureaucratic, consensus culture he's still sorting out. (Dan's boss)

By time point two bosses were commenting favourably or unfavourably on the SLJ's adaptive skills in this regard. It appeared bosses thought more highly of those SLJs who had the ability to adjust their style depending on context and situation than those who did not have this ability:

He has adaptive ability - he can pick things up quickly and flex his style as needed. (Alan's boss)

The things he's had to change are the need to debate things - you can't command and control people in BA - he can read when he needs to do things differently. (Mike's boss)

I don't want her to stop being herself, but I don't want her having grief every day - she'll have to adapt to the differing situations she meets. (Sue's boss)

Like SLJs, bosses felt the recruitment and selection process has some part to play in ensuring that the successful candidate's values matched those of the organisation or were adaptable to them. Consequently there were few comments relating to individuals having to make values changes in time point one, although there was a general feeling, expressed succinctly by one boss, that:

BA does have values and beliefs. If they're different from the company you came from then you have to change them. (Ed's boss)

The need for the SLJ to be adaptive came up again where conversations centred on the ability of the newcomer to align himself with the organisation's goals and plans. At time point one the conversation was on the need to be generally adaptive to the organisation:

We pick people who are self-adaptive they need to be able to adapt to a big organisation and what it's trying to do. (Bab's boss)

Where he used to manage he could use positional power. We can only achieve our goals using personal power and influence - I'm not sure if he understands or has adapted to that yet. (Bob's boss)

By time point two adaptation was related to specific projects in which the SLJ had been engaged:

Our goal is was to get the project up and running. She was thrown in at the deep end managing a big, high profile task and adapted her style to rise to the challenge. (Bev's boss)

He realised that the way to get the department running effectively, meeting its targets and delivering to plan was to modify his ways of management. (Ian's boss)

But the adaptation was not all one-way. The bosses commented on the SLJ's impact on the organisation. At time point one bosses were again speaking on first impressions:



He came in with strong views of how things should be done. He's pulled us up a couple of times in meetings. He's not been hiding his light at all. (Zak's boss)

He's immediately brought professionalism to his part of the organisation. (Tom's boss)

She's presenting as great model for professionalism, cross-functional thinking, communicating and commitment. All in all she's a great ambassador. (Sue's boss)

By time point two when the SLJs had been in the organisation a few months, bosses were able to speak more authoritatively about the SLJ's achievements:

What he's brought in has been a different way of doing things. He's very influential now in the department. (Zak's boss)

He's come up with several ways around problems. He's got some fresh approaches he's implemented in both change management and technically. (Fred's boss)

She's brought in various process aspects that she believes in and has made them effective. (Bev's boss)

## Summary

From the evidence it appears that SLJs and bosses are in accord over the part played by the SLJ in the OS process. The key attributes, which cut across all those mentioned in the OS literature, are the ability to quickly establish personal networks, to flex and modify style appropriately, to listen and understand before taking actions and to challenge effectively and make a positive contribution in doing so. In addition the SLJ must be adaptable to the new organisation's ways of doing things and willing to believe in BA and 'the BA way'.

For the most part SLJs and their bosses see this as a realistic and necessary price to pay for fitting in and getting on. Where people feel unhappy or unwilling to pay this price, it is generally clear by time point two, and is reflected in the comments of both the individuals and their bosses.

It is evident that there are differences in the content of the conversations between time points one and two. At time point two there is no evidence that the SLJ has reached the end point of socialisation. This supports the expectation that, for newcomers, OS is a process that unfolds over time. The following sections consider whether job movers go through a similar OS process.

### **Is the price of membership different for a mover?**

It is not surprising that movers within the organisation play a different part from SLJs in their socialisation to the new role. Part of the mover's heritage is that they are known to the organisation. This brings some advantages; for example, movers have already established ties to co-workers via existing networks, coalitions, and friendships as they noted:

Graduates who have done well have the right links into the networks. (Judy)

I came with credibility because I knew most people before I came in. (Greg)

Being internal, people can know your background and have seen what you've delivered in other areas. (Stan)

But being known also brings the disadvantage of giving movers a sense of security, which can prove false when they meet the cut and thrust of working with their colleagues:

There's an existing conflict within the management team. (Julie)

There are two camps around the table on many issues. (Luke)



It's very difficult to get a team consensus. (Fran)

Similarly, prior knowledge of the organisation may lead movers to give the impression that they are less motivated to learn about it in relation to their new roles than the SLJs are. Their language is less colourful than that of the SLJs on the topic, and their expressed learning needs are incremental. What movers say at time point one in this regard is more or less repeated at time point two:

You have to change to fit certain norms. (Roger)

I can't afford to be as much of a perfectionist as I have been in the past. (Jen)

I have to do a heads up every three months or so to just make sure I'm not sliding back into what I know and understand rather than going forward. (Rob)

In terms of personal competence in reading situations and getting them right early in the role, movers were reporting the need to use this skill in the new role:

I've been mindful to tread lighter than I would because there are some entrenched views.  
(Rick)

I've had to find an appropriate tone to maintain my stance but be more diplomatic. (Rose)

Hit the ground running is a way of saying come in and be effective. (Cath)

I've learned to work out what's important for me to achieve and modify my behaviour where it doesn't matter. (Mark)

But by time point two the feeling many said that they had found the appropriate style and behaviour for the role:

I felt I had to change to start with - the culture in this department is very different - I think I'm there now. (Gina)

Given that the average length of service for the job movers was thirteen years, it is not altogether surprising to find that they do not appear to reflect much on possessing values that match the organisation or are adaptable to them. Length of service appears to imply a level of organisational comfort and fit. Movers' comments about values are less about the organisation's values and more about the local or personal values:

It's not the behaviours I have difficulty with. It's the beliefs and values of my peer group. (Judy)

I constantly feel I should be valuing other things - things the team value, taking on their views and giving up mine. (Paul)

... (boss) has a comfort factor in his team of fully committed, loyal people who are experienced and well oiled. (Max)

In time point two, comments centre on how far the individual has been able to maintain individuality, and how much he/she has had to align with the local values:

I've been educated into different ways of looking at things. I wouldn't say my values have changed. (Luke)

There is a department identity which is quite strong and which people prefer you to be part of. (Cath)

I have had to give my values different levels of priority coming to this department. I've got used to it, but I still challenge it a bit. (Fran)



Movers did not comment on the need to align with the organisation goals and plans, perhaps because they had been imbued with them over a period of time. It may even be that they felt a sense of participation and ownership in relation to them.

In terms of their impact on the organisation, movers did comment on what they felt able to do. In time point one their comments were more about developing personal confidence in the role:

I've started to feel more confident about getting in there and doing things. (Mark)

It's a combination of moving up the ladder and knowing the department that's giving me confidence. (Roger)

What works is keeping in mind how am I moving the business forward? (Stan)

By time point two they have become more confident and are starting to make a difference. (This aspect is also discussed in Chapter Nine):

My new ideas have been welcomed. (Max)

It's harder to get things done than I thought it would be but it's beginning to work. (Rose)

I've had quite a lot of influence around the way things are done in the business. (Greg)

I'm trying to change attitudes in the department towards a stronger sense of urgency. (Jill)

In summary, it is evident that, for a variety of reasons, movers are making less dramatic personal adjustments to the new role than SLJs are. Reviewing their comments, it appears they are a step behind the SLJs in their drive and energy to make a difference. This may be because they are not being told explicitly that they have been brought into the role to 'shake things up'. It may be because they are coming to the new role with less

of a 'beginner's eye', and thus see fewer opportunities for change. It may be because they are less confident in their professional skills (this seems to be the case for those of the group who were promoted into the new role). It may be because they are not having to learn 'the organisation', but are learning more local aspects. Then again it may be for other reasons altogether.

Nevertheless there is evidence that the movers are experiencing a socialisation process, albeit one with different emphases from that experienced by a newcomer to the organisation. The following section discusses the movers' bosses' perspective on what part the mover plays in his socialisation to the role.

### **How the movers' bosses view the impact of the mover on the OS process**

The bosses of movers took the view that, because a mover had organisational history and a track record, the impact she/he had on his socialisation would be more muted than that of a newcomer. The personal changes would be fewer and the learning curve less steep. Bosses expected that the mover would be able to take on the role quickly, competently and without making waves and, in theory, would need to work less hard to socialise himself.

In several cases the boss had known the mover previously and specifically wanted him for the job, expecting a good match from a known quantity. At the same time bosses noted two disadvantages of recruiting internally. First, that the movers might come with organisational baggage, and second, that the movers had fewer fresh ideas and approaches than the joiners had.

Commenting on the specific attributes needed by movers to facilitate their OS, bosses at both time points cited the ability to develop ties to co-workers via the establishment of networks, coalitions, and friendships. But rather than commenting at an organisational



level (as the SLJs bosses did), movers' bosses commented at a local level. Additionally, there was very little difference in the comment content between the two time points:

There were issues around Paul getting promotion over other individuals. (Paul's boss)

She's superb at working with colleagues - quite remarkable. (Gina's boss)

He has a good capacity to gain support. He's not confrontational, not too threatening with people. (Roger's boss)

Movers' bosses commented in time point one (but not time point two) on the motivation of the newcomer to learn what is needed, particularly on the motivation to change attributes in order to get the job done:

He can be stubborn, which slows things up - on occasions some would like him to move more quickly. (Mark's boss)

... Stan has had to change his pace of working. He's been pulled left, right and centre. (Stan's boss)

He's definitely had to change his approach in adapting to this different work environment. (Max's boss)

Like the SLJs, movers had to be competent at reading situations and reacting appropriately in order to get on. Bosses noted that in the initial weeks, two sets of skills were key:

Humility and the ability to listen to advice and feedback. (Fran's boss)

Selecting where to focus and deciding where she can make the best contribution. (Judy's boss)

By the second time period, bosses were commenting on successful movers in terms of the ways they had changed attitudes:

He's had to change his attitude in terms of working with his team. (Rob's boss)

He needed to change, to become involved in more detail and he's done this. (Luke's boss)

Movers' bosses were almost unanimous in saying that the recruitment process successfully identified those who possessed values that matched the department's or were adaptable to them. (Bosses did not comment on organisational values.) The common view was that once someone was recruited and it was seen that his values matched, there was no further need for concern. Thus the question of a person's values was not raised in time period two. It may also be the case that, because of their organisational experience, movers need to make less adjustment in values than newcomers:

We're consciously recruiting people to help change the values of this department. (Rose's boss)

When we interview, we're looking for people with the right values and beliefs - it's a pretty good process for weeding out people who don't fit. (Jen's boss)

We do have a spirit/culture of our own and do try and draw people into line. We can't run with a load of singletons. (Julie's boss)

Movers' bosses did not comment, either at time point one or two, on the ability of the newcomer to align with the organisation goals and plans, but they did talk about the impact of the mover on their part of the organisation. It appears the movers' impact was



less great than that of SLJs, implying that bosses were not expecting as much from a mover as they were from a newcomer in the first instance:

Is he making an impact? I judge this on the type of questions people ask and he's asking the right questions. (Greg's boss)

He's more than happy to challenge the status quo. (Rick's boss)

He recognises that he's a rookie and not set to change things immediately. (Roger's boss)

By the second time point, the impact was assessed more in terms of maintenance activity than change activity, and several of the bosses commented on impact in rather lack-lustre terms:

His output has increased since his appraisal - he's been able to use his experience in high volume. What he's good at is consulting and advising me. (Max's boss)

We're looking for challenge but don't want the boat rocked. (Julie's boss)

She may be missing opportunities. (Rose's boss)

She may have found it more difficult to get things done. (Cath's boss)

## Summary

It seems that differences between the part played by SLJs and movers in their own OS process is tied partly to the familiarity each has with the situation and partly to the nature of the interaction with other stakeholders. For the most part, movers understand the macro organisational culture. To use the analogy of moving house, movers are like people moving from one location to another within the same country. In contrast, joiners have come to a foreign land, which makes the part they have to play in their OS that much more dramatic: they have so much more to learn about the culture. 'And culture

must be understood if one is to get along at all, as tourists in foreign lands and new employees in organisations often discover to their dismay.' (Schein 1985:4).

The table below summarises and compares the part the SLJs and movers play in their OS in relation to each of the attributes previous researchers have suggested are contributory.

**TABLE 38: THE PART SLJs PLAY IN THEIR OS LINKED TO ATTRIBUTES**

<b>Attribute which plays part in OS</b>	<b>SLJs time one</b>	<b>SLJs time two</b>	<b>Movers time one</b>	<b>Movers time two</b>
Development of ties	Looking around	Establishing networks	Assuming networks	Reviewing networks
Motivation to learn	Changing working practices	Changing style	Making adjustments	Maintaining progress
Competence in reading situation	Cautiously reading culture	Recognising they've adjusted to culture	Reading the signals	Behaving appropriately
Possession of values	Observing BA's values in use	Adapting their values to BA's	Learning department's values	Modifying to department's values
Alignment with organisation	Learning the BA way	Aligning to the BA way	-	-
Impact on organisation ( <i>not mentioned by previous researchers</i> )	Using professional skills	Making changes	Biding time	Maintaining delivery

What is clear from the data is that the SLJ, like the movers, has a clear role to play in his socialisation. In both cases the role changes over time. Thus the expectation that the OS process is interactive, with the newcomer being influential in the process, was supported.

What is also evident is that some key variables appear necessary for fitting in and others for getting on. Which variables are significantly correlated depends first on whether the SLJ group or the mover group is being considered (as the two groups' results are



different), and second, on which time point is being considered (again the significantly correlated variables are different for each group).

The only two variables shared by SLJs and movers in both time points were learning and change. As the table below shows, the relationships were not always between the same pairs of variables.

**TABLE 39: VARIABLES SHOWING CORRELATION BY GROUP AND TIME POINT  
(P<0.01)**

Joiners time one		Joiners time two	
Change and support	.611	Change and support	.725
Learning and initiative	-.692	Learning and behaviour	-.500
Movers time one		Movers time two	
Learning and acceptance	.921	Learning and acceptance	.634
Change and effectiveness	.593	Values and change	-.569

(All correlation co-efficients significant at p<0.01)

By looking at the investiture/divestiture tactic in this way, it seems that specific aspects of the tactic affect various aspects of performance to a greater or less extent. The preceding discussion has considered those that appeared crucial to this study's sample.

Overall, the aggregation of the variables of investiture/divestiture and those of performance demonstrate a close relationship between the two, a relationship which was confirmed both by the 'voices' of the informants and the quantitative analysis. (See Chapter Seven.) The following section presents further documentary evidence to support the quantitative and qualitative data evidence of the link between the investiture tactic and performance.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN: DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

Chapter Seven discussed the significant relationship found in BA between the investiture/divestiture tactic as a whole and performance. The previous section has considered the variables that comprise the tactic, and has presented more detailed confirmatory findings of this relationship.

### Performance review process

Further evidence that investiture/divestiture and performance are closely related was found by looking at data from the BA Performance Review Process for the performance year April 2000 - April 2001. Table 40 below summarises this. It is striking, but not surprising (given findings of the data analysis), that the externally hired newcomers who formed the SLJ group had twice the number of 'exceed' ratings as the mover group. What is interesting, given their newness to the organisation, is why.

**TABLE 40: PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT OF CASES IN YEAR APRIL 2000 - APRIL 2001**

	Performance rating			
	Not met or uncategorised	Met	Well Met	Exceed
SLJ (N = 17)	18% (no category, left)	12%*	35%	35%
SLJ pilot group (N= 13)	31% (no category, left)	7%	31%	31%
3 SLJs outside study	1 (no category, left)	0	0	2
Total SLJs (N= 33)	25% (no category, left)	9%	33%	33%
Mover (N = 17)	6% (no category, left)	12%	65%	17%
Whole SM population (N= 560)	1% (not met)	22%	58%	19%

\*One person in this category left in May 2001

A number of explanations are possible for this. It is clear that SLJs are party to a wide range of mainly individualised OS activities, some apparently undertaken consciously by stakeholders (including the SLJ), others seemingly less conscious or intuitive. This activity may be the sole input to the exceed rating (ie there is a direct and unmediated link between investiture/divestiture and performance).



However, analysis of the workplace interactions reveals a number of mediating factors. For example, there may be a complex interplay between fitting in and getting on. As has been noted in the first instance, the SLJ is more concerned with fitting in than with getting on, but the boss is concerned from the start with the SLJ getting on. Thus it might be deduced, for optimum performance the SLJ needs to be highly skilled at both fitting in and getting on. (Examining the data of the specific individuals who were rated 'exceed', cross-checking this with their boss's data, and comparing them with other SLJs who were rated lower, suggests that the deduction is accurate.) But the exact relationship between the two elements is not predictable or clear.

A second mediating factor which presents are the personality attributes of the SLJs. It is possible that they have characteristics which make them more able to fit in and get on than movers. Conversations with BA's occupational psychologist, and analysis of related documents, suggested that higher performers were more open to new experiences, were more confident in using intuitive thinking, and were more able to tolerate high degrees of ambiguity and change than lower ranked performers. However, this analysis came with the caveat that performance was less to do with the person and more to do with relationships, environment and process. Hunting for the ideal personality profile was, in the words of the psychologist, 'like hunting for the snark'.

Other possible factors are that SLJs work harder than movers, are more visible, have clearer objectives, or have better/different selection and recruitment procedures. Alternatively, it may be that bosses try to validate their choice of candidates by ranking them more highly than other staff; try to keep the new joiner by using the review process to incentivise; or simply enjoy having a wider pool from which to choose a better candidate.

Even with this range of possibilities to account for the high proportion of SLJ exceed rankings, it is unlikely that the support these offer to the relationship between OS and performance is coincidence or chance. The groups studied were homogeneous. (See Chapter Seven.) Further, Guidance Notes (see Appendix 11) given to HR Managers and line managers on the Performance Review state the percentage of rankings expected in each grade (up to 5% not met; 35% met; 45% well met; 15% exceed) and also note the requirement for 360 degree feedback on each person.

In terms of performance review ratings, movers were slightly below the whole SM population on the 'exceed' rating, and well below the SLJ numbers. The data suggests that movers have some problems fitting in with their peers and workgroup and they are less confident than SLJs about making a departmental or organisational impact. From this it may be deduced that movers would be lower than SLJs on both the fitting in and getting on dimensions of the performance: a deduction reflected in the overall lower performance ratings of movers compared with SLJs. Even so, movers were somewhat above the whole SM population on the 'well met' rating. Of interest is the fact that the mover group had fewer in the 'met' category and more in the 'well met' than the overall BA SM population.

A number of mediating factors may explain the lower ratings of movers compared with SLJs. It may be that movers get less feedback and guidance from their bosses, or that their OS activity was more locally focused and lower-key than that of SLJs' (perhaps visibility at an organisational level is a pre-requisite for an exceed rating). Alternatively, it may be that their performance ranking was clouded by their organisational history, or that some movers concentrated on getting to grips with being promoted, and others on learning the technicalities of the new role. (Some evidently were doing both).



Although the mover group was not the focus of the study, both the quantitative and qualitative data analysis and their performance review ratings suggest that OS activity is an integral part of the intra-organisation job mover's experience.

## **Summary**

This study was designed to look at the relationship between SLJs and performance by collecting and analysing a range of data, both quantitative and qualitative, at two time points. Data was drawn from self-report and manager report, document analysis and comparison with a similar group. The findings from the various types of data analysed both individually and collectively support Ashforth and Saks's (1996) finding that OS activity is strongly related to effective performance. Further it is evident from the data analysis that the relationship is complex, dynamic and contingent on a range of factors.

The following section discusses the implications for OS drawn from the data.

## **CHAPTER TWELVE: IMPLICATIONS FOR OS DRAWN FROM THE DATA**

The data analysis aimed to answer the question 'What is the extent of the relationship between the investiture tactic and performance' by answering the four sub-questions, which together comprise the tactic:

1. What and how are newcomers learning in order to get to grips with the new organisation?
2. Which experienced organisational members are most influential in the OS process?
3. What is the relationship between fitting in/getting on and time?
4. What part does the newcomer play in his OS?

Several themes emerge from the analysis, which cut across these questions, but which focus on the need to make the joining experience more effective. This need arises from the costs mentioned at the start of this thesis: the financial costs, the personal costs, and the organisational costs.

The evidence suggests two ways to make SLJ OS more effective. First, provide organisationally consistent checklists covering OS activity for SLJs and their roles. Second, train insiders to facilitate the OS of SLJs. This chapter continues the discussion by focusing on these two activities.

### **Reducing the cost of joining**

In terms of financial cost - the more quickly and effectively the SLJ can start to deliver on the job the greater the financial savings. As the data show, the SLJs' bosses are, from the start, focused on how quickly and effectively the SLJ can deliver on the job while the SLJ is more concerned with establishing social currency. It can be predicted that the quicker the fitting in, the sooner the getting on can begin.



In terms of personal cost – much of the SLJ learning is unstructured and hard work, even though it appears to progress rapidly. It is likely that there are more efficient and effective ways for the SLJs to learn about the new organisation and role, ways which will enable the necessary fitting in to take place at less personal cost, and more quickly.

In terms of organisational costs – it is the lack of an apparently consistent rationale in recruiting SLJs, together with a lack of consistent messages about the organisation that may cost the organisation dear. This lack of HR strategy means that the organisation is in danger of ‘missing a trick.’ For example, if BA were serious about needing to change the culture, it could use the SLJ population as conscious agents of change, recruiting them specifically for their ability in this field (Feldman 1981). The HR strategy for bringing in SLJs was not mentioned by a single informant.

Given that there are also costs in improving the OS experience, a balanced judgement would need to be taken on whether such activity made business sense.

### **OS of SLJs: checklist of activity**

The combined comments of both the SLJ group and the mover group and their bosses suggest eight aspects for improvement of the OS experience. Several of these have been noted by earlier research in the field, but there is no evidence that they have been previously combined to form a practical organisation checklist for the OS of ‘veteran’ newcomers.

If OS interventions were designed which covered all eight of these aspects it is likely that SLJs would achieve a sense of competence in the role and task and a sense of acceptance into the workgroup and organisation (Miller and Jablin 1991.) It is postulated that if HR departments and line managers were to use the checklist as part of a ‘toolkit’ for helping their SLJs enter the organisation the result would be a swift and effective transition from outsider to insider.

The checklist proposed is highlighted below. As it has been developed from the research for this thesis, it provides some evidence to support the notion that learning partnerships can produce the different outcomes required by academia and the commercial company (Morsing and Vendelo undated).

Within BA, the HR Director (who had sponsored the research) agreed that the HR department would be a suitable organisational 'owner' to ensure that interventions for each aspect of the checklist were designed and monitored. He took this view, first because selection, recruitment and socialisation of staff were part of the published HR strategy and he recognised that OS 'is a process that can make or break a career and that can make or break organisational systems of manpower planning.' (Burdett 1991:16).

Second he thought the HR function to be an appropriate 'owner' of the checklist because he agreed 'that the staffing practices of top management are tied to the nature of the business because different aspects of business demand different behaviours from the individuals running them. ... Selecting the right top manager is an important staffing decision.' (Schuler and Jackson 1987:207.) In BA and similar companies the HR function is usually the guardian of staffing practices.

#### **CHECKLIST FOR USE WITH SENIOR LEVEL JOINERS**

##### **Workgroup/organisation aspects**

1. Encouraging bosses and peers to provide a psychologically safe environment for the SLJ. This has been defined as one with

'Opportunities for training and practice

Support and encouragement to overcome the shame and fear of making errors

Coaching, and rewards for efforts in the right direction

Norms that legitimise the making of errors

Norms that reward innovative thinking and experimentation' (Schein 1993:89)

2. Designing specific (but individualised) learning programmes for the SLJs which make use of a range of learning styles and methods but recognise that their previous experience enables them 'to acquire new knowledge at a rapid pace.' (Reichers, Wanous and Steele 1994:18). The learning programmes must acknowledge the need for the SLJ to be delivering on the job at the same time as he/she is learning.



3. Promulgating clear organisational values against which the SLJs can align (or choose not to). (Rose 1997:22)
4. Helping the SLJ develop a set of shared common expectations with their key subordinates or their bosses. ('The single most salient difference between the successful and the failed transitions was the quality of the new manager's working relationships at the end of his first year.' Gabarro 1985:10)

#### **Role/task aspects**

5. Ensuring that there is complete clarity on objectives of the role, and if this changes during the selection and recruitment process, discussing this with the SLJ.
6. Recognising the need the SLJ has (but may not express) to discuss the new role with a neutral party, for example a mentor. Allowing the time and space for him to reflect on the role.
7. Developing a method for ensuring that SLJs get consistent messages from the stakeholder groups specifically on why he/she has been brought into the organisation and what he/she is expected to deliver.
8. Stating explicitly the behavioural norms that drive business success in the organisation (versus the social conventions that signal commitment and belonging). (Pascale 1985:25)

As far as the job movers are concerned, it is predicted that, if they too experienced the activities on the checklist above, their fitting in and getting on would be facilitated. Movers' comments suggested that they would also benefit from the addition of one item to the checklist:

9. Giving clarity over the differences between old grade and new grade ('the essence of SM-ness')

If the HR function were to take 'ownership' of the checklist, it would be responsible for ensuring that the activities on the list were instigated. Effective deployment of the checklist would be likely to result in wider organisational development.

#### **Training insiders to facilitate the OS of newcomers**

Ostroff and Kozlowski (1992:872) note that 'it might be beneficial to develop socialisation programmes which train insiders to facilitate newcomers' socialisation, as well as to

encourage newcomers to adopt useful learning strategies by emphasising social learning, what content areas are important, and how to learn about them'.

This view is supported by Preston (1993:30). She states that 'if it is personal support at an informal level which has the greatest effect on understanding the organisation and its culture, it seems important that more time and thought should be given to how this might be provided for the benefit of all'.

The comments of informants make it clear that stakeholders in the role would benefit from having guidelines on how to socialise SLJs. Bosses particularly were aware of their own essential role in effective socialisation, but several had only realised this with hindsight.

The conversations made it clear that when SLJs join, their 'information-seeking efforts are likely to be focused on their supervisors and co-workers because the other sources are usually neither equally available nor helpful to new hires' (Miller and Jablin 1991:97). It follows that it would benefit the experienced organisation member to be trained in specific skills (based on interventions suggested by the checklist) in order to support the effective socialisation of the SLJ. Taking the checklist and the training together would enable what has been described as 'in response' (Louis 1980:245) OS for the newcomer. From this study it is evident that certain skills are needed to support effective OS. These appear to be:

1. Identifying what the SLJ needs to learn
2. Identifying the best method by which this learning could be acquired
3. Explaining and interpreting the organisation's social conventions (including 'acceptable mannerisms, dress and talk associated with his position, and the leeway that is acceptable'. Fineman 1996 21)
4. Explaining and interpreting the organisation's norms for business success
5. Demonstrating how to model the values of the organisation and the department



6. Helping the newcomer develop 'a map of the territory, that is sufficiently consonant with the maps that insiders carry, and by which members enact the territory.' (Louis 1980:233)
7. Supporting the newcomer in 'letting go' of old roles and unfreezing previous experience, as 'for experienced employees, the unlearning or unfreezing of the lessons learned in their prior organisation is often the hardest stage' (Holton 1996:248).

The evidence from this research study is that experienced newcomers need an individualised socialisation 'programme' led by those insiders with whom they have the most day to day interaction. Ideally this should be led by the newcomer's boss, or at least overseen by him, as 'it is the boss who really has the power to create the climate which will lead to rebellion, uniformity, or creative individualism' (Schein 1968:15). It is of note that previous research has found that 'individualised socialisation appears to promote ... superior performance' (Ashforth and Saks 1996:16). Training experienced organisational members to facilitate the OS of SLJs is also likely to result in wider organisational development.

The two 'tools' described above have emerged from this PhD (and thus academic) study. They appear to be two practical organisational development 'tools'. Although they need to be tested in an organisation, the researcher's experience suggests that they would work. Proof that they did would contribute to the proposition that 'it is realistic for social scientists to cross the gap between science and practice without structures and roles dedicated to the transfer of knowledge for conceptual utilisation' (Morsing and Vendelo undated:16).

## **Summary**

This section has briefly discussed how the costs of joining may be reduced, by making the joining experience more effective. Two methods (which work together) have been suggested. First, the provision of an organisationally consistent checklist outlining OS

activity for SLJs and their roles. Second, the provision of training insiders to facilitate 'in response' OS of SLJs.

The following section discusses the application of the findings which emerge from this study's data analysis in two ways: first, in relation to the OS literature, and second. in relation to the 'in response' OS discussed.



## **CHAPTER THIRTEEN: IMPLICATIONS OF THE DATA IN RELATION TO THE INVESTITURE/DIVESTITURE TACTIC**

This section discusses, in the light of the data analysis, the value of considering the investiture/divestiture tactic as standalone. It opens with a(nother) brief recap on the tactic. This is followed by a short discussion on whether BA's SLJs were invested or divested in terms of the tactic. The discussion then moves on to look at the complexities of the tactic, before closing with the statement that it is better viewed as standalone.

### **Recap on the investiture/divestiture tactic**

Table 13 (Chapter Four) gave the two definitions of investiture. The first focused on the processes that are constructed to confirm or disconfirm the newcomer's identity, the second focused on the positive or negative social support the newcomer receives. As discussed, these definitions have been construed as one-way: from the organisation (or its members) to the newcomer.

Also discussed (Chapter Four) is the fact that the tactic is problematic, with investiture being considered one of the individualised group in some studies, and one of the institutionalised group (with divestiture in the opposing group) in others. From either stand, it is argued that individualised tactics lead to an innovative role orientation, and institutionalised tactics lead to a custodial role orientation. Some studies have suggested that large and mechanistic organisations, such as BA, favour institutionalised socialisation.

### **BA's SLJs: invested or divested?**

Having said this, the data analysis suggested that the sample studied in this research experienced individualised rather than institutionalised OS. And that this OS is ad hoc and unstructured. In relation to the specific investiture/divestiture tactic, the observed

evidence is that (in BA at least) there is little that is consciously constructed to confirm or disconfirm the newcomer's identity. It appears that, in subtle and various ways, aspects of identity are confirmed and others disconfirmed (i.e. there is both investiture and divestiture) in a process of mutual and interactive adaptation over time.

For the most part, newcomers feel that it is appropriate and necessary to make the adaptations in order to fit in and get on. The relationship between confirmation (or not) of identity and performance appears to relate to the success of the adaptation process of all parties.

For the BA SLJs, the social support that they received is linked to their own personalities and attributes, to the type of role they were brought in to do, and to the way the individuals and stakeholders felt about the newcomer at different points in time. Thus social support could be given by some people and not by others. Equally, the newcomer makes choices on who to seek support from and who not to, depending on a range of factors. So the relationship between social support being given or withheld, and performance, appears to be partly related to the newcomer's entering identity and partly dependent on aspects of the other themes discussed in this study: time, role context, and other stakeholders. (Evans and Lorange 1989)

Effective performance (here measured by the BA performance review process) appeared to be dependent on the correct the right balance being struck between investiture and divestiture (both definitions) at the right time period. But this is a rather broad-brush statement.

### **The complexities of the tactic**

To access the detail, this study used - in slightly modified form - the questionnaire items used in previous studies of the tactic. Unlike the other studies, this study labelled each of



the items as a variable, and was thus able to look in more depth at the tactic than the previous studies, which had 'collapsed' the items and analysed them as one set.

In taking this detailed approach it became clear, during the data analysis, that some variables comprising the tactic were more important than other variables in relation to performance. It was also found that the importance of specific variables shifted over time. This type of shift, over time, has also been noted in the study by Ostroff and Kozlowski (1992:850). They say that 'over time, different contextual features or different sources of information may become more or less salient as individuals adapt to their new organisation environment'. Additionally it is evident (as previously discussed) that the variables that were rated as important by SLJs at both time points were predominantly to do with fitting in, while their bosses were concerned, at both time points, more with the SLJs getting on.

This shift in the importance of the variables, and the implications of the complexity of interplay between the SLJs' perspectives and the bosses' perspectives, suggests that the tactic is better viewed from an interactionist stance, one where the newcomer is acknowledged to be proactively participating in his OS (Holton and Russell 1997).

As noted earlier, (Chapter Five), it was expected that OS would emerge as an interactive process with a number of 'players in the game', and it was on this basis that the research model was designed. As the data analysis reveals one of the outcomes of the design was the uncovering of the complexities inherent within the tactic.

### **The tactic viewed as standalone**

From the evidence of this study, consideration of the tactic as linear and either/or (either investiture or divestiture) deprives it of much of its potential. By treating it as independent, standalone and dynamic, it becomes possible to capture some its value. It then has the potential for use as a unifier for OS theory development (a distinct possibility

given that the variables within the tactic are evident in each of the definitions of OS presented in Chapter Two.)

When the tactic is viewed as standalone, the key problem associated with it - the question of whether investiture is an institutionalised or individualised tactic – is rendered immaterial. (As this study's findings suggest it would appear that it could be either or both, that the answer is dependent on circumstance and is of dubious use anyway).

Developing the tactic as standalone and independent, as in this study breaks new OS ground and contributes a little more to knowledge in the OS field.

## **Summary**

This section has discussed why the investiture/divestiture tactic merits standing alone. The following section answers the question 'what is the extent of the relationship between investiture/divestiture and performance?' from an interactionist perspective, drawing on the range of data sources used in this study. It goes on to show how the model presented in Chapter Five can be used as a practical diagnostic tool to develop the 'in response' induction mentioned in the previous section.



# CHAPTER FOURTEEN: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INVESTITURE AND PERFORMANCE

The main question this research set out to answer to was 'What is the extent of the relationship between investiture and performance?' It sought to do this by answering four sub-questions identified from the themes arising from the various definitions of OS (presented in Table 2) and from a review of the investiture/divestiture literature. These questions were what and how are newcomers learning in order to get to grips with the new organisation? What is the relationship between fitting in/getting on and time? Which experienced organisational members are most influential in the OS process? What part does the newcomer play in his OS?

As described in Chapter Five, the total research design (based on logic and previous theory) aimed to follow the recommendations for addressing the methodological issues identified by other OS researchers. These are listed in Chapter Two but for ease of reading are re-presented here.

**TABLE 41: METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES RELATING TO OS REARCH**

Methodological issue	Identified by previous research
The identification of what is learned by newcomers during socialisation	Louis 1980:234; Ostroff and Kozlowski 1993:172; Chao et al 1994:730,731; Ashforth, Saks and Lee 1998:921; Anakwe and Greenhaus 1999:2; Klein and Weaver 2000:11
The effectiveness and outcomes of the socialisation process	Feldman 1981:316; Reichers 1987:281; Allen and Meyer 1990:854; Ostroff and Kozlowski 1992:868; Chao et al 1994:730; Ashforth and Saks 1996:17; Holton 1996:247; Anakwe and Greenhaus 1999:1
The role of other people in the socialisation of newcomers	Reichers 1987:285; Chatman 1989:335; Ostroff and Kozlowski 1992:868; Ostroff and Kozlowski 1993:182; Preston 1993:30; Saks and Ashforth 1997:250
The impact on the newcomer of the stakeholders and role context	West, Nicholson and Rees 1987:111; Preston 1993:31; Saks and Ashforth 1997:265; Ashforth, Saks and Lee 1998:921; Whetten and Godfrey 1998:200).

The expansion of the focus beyond newcomers	Schein 1968; Jones 1983; Fisher 1986; Ostroff and Kozlowski 1992; Preston 1993; Chao et al 1994; Fineman 1996; Holton 1996; Saks and Ashforth 1997; Saks and Ashforth 1997, 1998
The types of consciously planned OS interventions and practices most likely to facilitate fitting in and getting on	Van Maanen 1979; Feldman 1981; Jones 1986; Schuler and Jackson 1987; West, Nicholson, Rees 1987; Ostroff and Kozlowski 1992; Preston 1993; Ferner1994; Dutton, Dukerich, Harquail 1994; Noneka and Takeuchi 1995; Saks and Ashforth 1997, 1998; Whetten and Godfrey 1998; Klein and Weaver 2000
The rate at which newcomers adjust and are socialised.	Feldman1976; Louis 1980; Gabarro 1985; Van Maanen 1979; Reichers 1987; Reichers, Wanous and Steele 1994

Additionally, the design aimed to build from and integrate the four prevailing models of OS appearing in the literature (Wanous and Colella 1989:99). These are presented and discussed in Chapter Two, but again for ease of reading are summarised below:

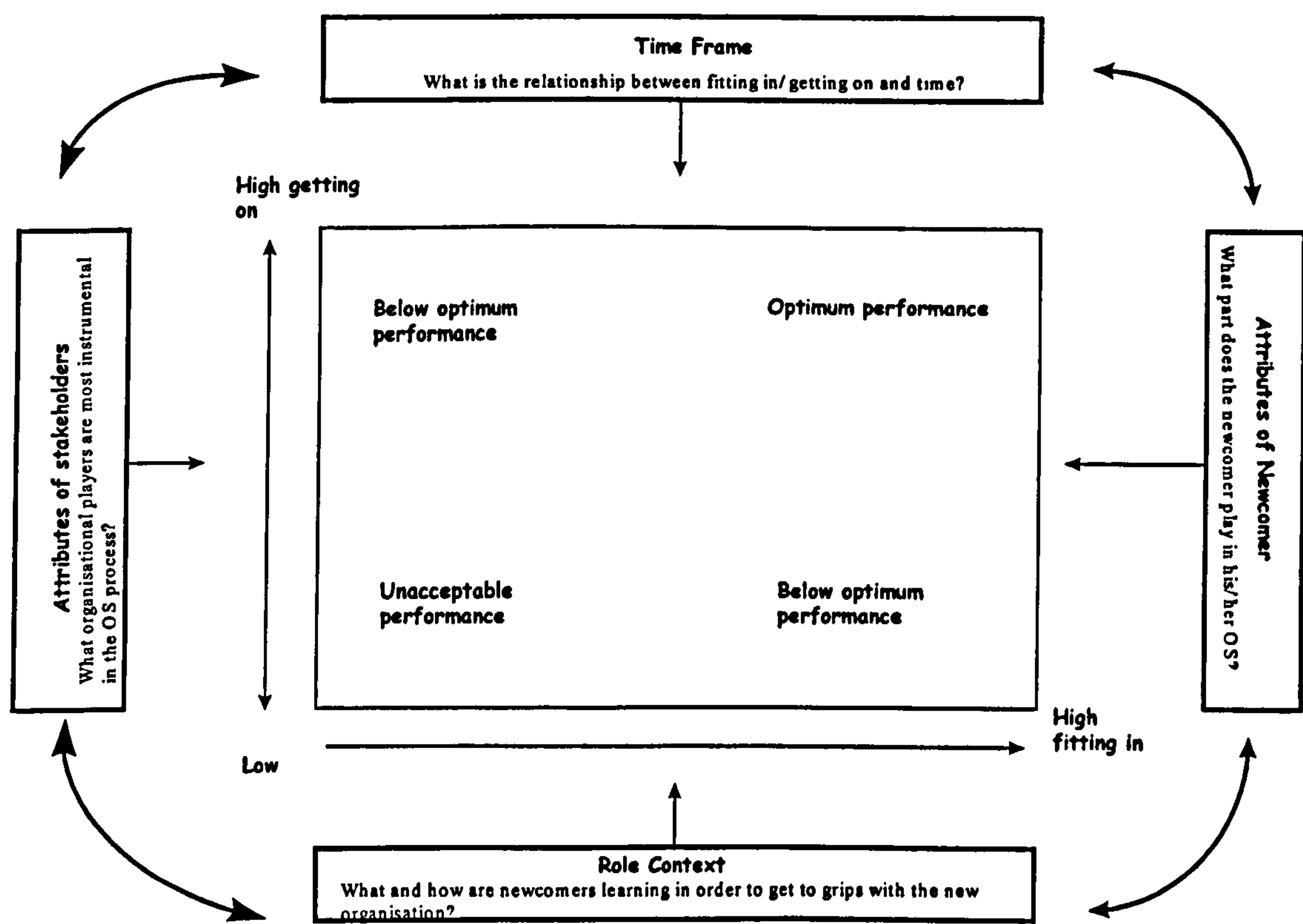
**TABLE 42: MODELS OF OS**

Model of OS	Originating research studies	Key concepts
Stage models	Buchanan (1974), Feldman (1976a, 1976b), Porter, Lawler and Hackman (1975), Schein (1978)	Stage models consider <u>what</u> the newcomer is experiencing over a period of time and seek to explain the sequence and timing of changes that occur as newcomers are transformed from outsiders to insiders (Bauer et al 1998:153).
Tactics models	Van Maanen (1979)	Tactics models consider aspects of a particular dimension of organisationally initiated response to newcomers in relation to its opposite.
Process models	Fisher (1980) Chatman (1989) Chao et al (1994) Ashforth, Saks and Lee (1998)	Process models consider <u>how</u> the process of socialisation occurs by identifying variables that influence the socialisation process and its outcomes
Content models	Ostroff and Kozlowski 1992, 1993; Morrison 1993; Chao et al 1994; Kramer 1994; Holder 1995; Kramer et al 1995; Morrison 1995; Saks and Ashforth 1997	Content models consider both what is learned during socialisation and how it is learned.



From these sources and with these aims, an interactionist model, portraying newcomers as proactive participants in their socialisation (Holton and Russell 1997), was designed for this research. This model was capable of examining the interaction between organisational context and various forms of newcomer proactivity (Ashforth, Saks and Lee 1998:920). It was anticipated that this model would address some of the methodological issues identified by previous researchers and also integrate the key concepts of the four prevailing OS models. (The other methodological issues identified were addressed by other aspects of the research design). For ease of reading the model is represented below.

**FIGURE 3: MODEL TO DETERMINE THE EXTENT OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE INVESTITURE TACTIC AND PERFORMANCE**



The table below describes how the model was built up.

**TABLE 43: HOW THE MODEL WAS BUILT UP**

<b>Question arising from definition</b>	<b>Methodological issue addressed</b>	<b>Prevailing model integrated</b>	<b>Label on this research's model</b>
What and how are newcomers learning in order to get to grips with the new organisation?	The identification of what is learned by newcomers during socialisation  The types of consciously planned OS interventions and practices most likely to facilitate fitting in and getting on	Content models	Role context
What is the relationship between fitting in/getting on and time?	The rate at which newcomers adjust and are socialised.	Stage models Process models	Time frame
Which experienced organisational members are most influential in the OS process?	The role of other people in the socialisation of newcomers	Process models Tactics models	Attributes of stakeholders
What part does the newcomer play in his OS?	The impact on the newcomer of the stakeholders and role context	Process models	Attributes of newcomers

The model was also designed to examine the extent of the relationship between investiture and performance working from the interactionist perspective that role context, stakeholders, newcomers and time continuously interact each with the other resulting in various levels of input into the central performance (effectiveness) box.

**What is the extent of the relationship?**

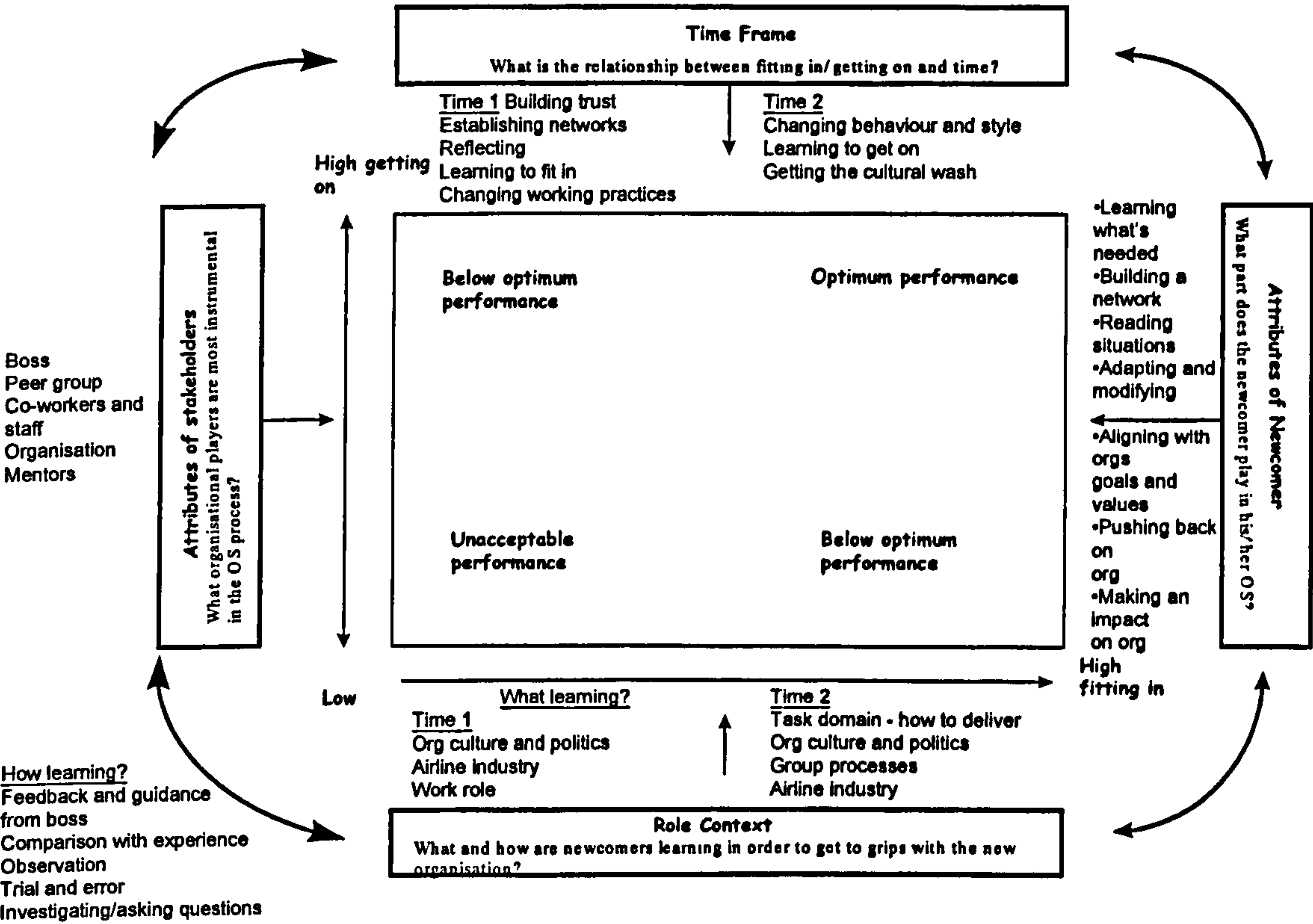
By labelling the model with the key findings of the data analysis (see Figure 3 below) it is evident that the information required in order to assess the extent of the relationship between the tactic and performance cannot be acquired simply. As the model illustrates,



this study has found that performance levels depend on a mix of inputs from the stakeholders, the individual, and the role context, and these vary over time.

Looking at the labelled model clarifies the relationship between the elements which together comprise the investiture tactic. It can be seen that this relationship is complex, contingent, and continuous. The variables and inputs related to each one of the four elements interact each with each other over time in a way that results in one of four ranges of effective performance – themselves not clearly bounded.

FIGURE 4: SLJS’ MAP OF RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INVESTITURE/DIVESTITURE AND PERFORMANCE



Since the focus of the OS process is the individual newcomer (there would be no process without him), the most realistic answer to the question, 'What is the extent of the relationship between investiture and performance?' is that it depends predominantly, but not solely, on that individual's ways of working with the constituent OS elements (those labelled in the figure above).

Because the newcomer who has the pivotal role and 'without commitment, insight, subtlety, and an informed perspective on the part of the new executive regarding what is involved, he/she is not only putting at risk success in the long term, but also perhaps sowing the seeds of early rejection.' (Burdett 1991:24) it is logical to suggest that his part in the OS process is at least of equal importance to that of the other stakeholders. Although this research has found that they have a significant role to play in the interactions, it is the newcomer who is centre stage. This suggestion contradicts OS theories of one-way and 'done to' the newcomer.

The findings from this research reveal that aiming to examine the extent of the relationship between investiture and performance at whole tactic level is not satisfactory. There is no richness in simply knowing that there is a relationship. In 'atomising' the tactic the main question becomes inappropriate and the sub-questions that form it become the appropriate level at which to make the assessment.

Chapter Thirteen has presented the argument in favour of viewing the tactic as independent and standalone. The fact that there is a relationship between the tactic as a whole and performance has been confirmed by the data analysis. But to restate the point, the extent of the relationship cannot be determined at the whole tactic level. However, finding that the relationship is complex, contingent and continuous at the sub-question level provides a rich field for looking more closely at OS. The following sections discuss these the aspects of complexity, contingency and continuousness in more detail.

## **OS is complex**

OS is complex, because the degree to which the process is one of divestiture or investiture to a recruit is, in part, a function of his entering characteristics and orientation toward the role (Evans and Lorange 1989). Developing this, what and how the SLJ needs to learn is dependent on a number of factors, for example,: the manner in which he



learns and assumes a specific role (Chao et al 1994); the ways in which he can align his personal knowledge, experience, values and sense of importance with the organisation's values, goals and plans (Rose 1997); his ability to 'read' and understand what is happening in the organisation (Morgan 1997); the type of interpretive scheme and cognitive maps he constructs in order to understand the new organisation (Miller and Jablin 1991), and what type of relationships he develops with the organisational insiders. This last is particularly important as a number of researchers have noted that those who are able to actively develop networks, information links, supply links, purchasing links, support links, friendship links, and ties to co-workers are more likely to be effective in their role (Fineman 1996; Anakwe and Greenhaus 1999; Carroll and Teo 1996; Chatman 1989; Saks and Ashforth 1997; Ostroff and Kozlowski 1992; Ashforth and Mael 1989; Miller and Jablin 1991). This research substantiates the work of others in finding that SLJs need to learn the culture of the organisation which is a difficult learning challenge because it is largely informal, contextual, unofficial, and is both created and transmitted through interpersonal interaction (Holton 1996). Figure 3 illustrates what and how the SLJs are learning on the bottom horizontal axis and from whom they are learning it on the vertical left-hand axis. The attributes the SLJs need to bring to the learning process are given on the right-hand vertical axis.

## **OS is contingent**

OS is contingent, because as can be seen, the range of process variables involved is broad. As discussed earlier in the thesis, to date these variables have largely been studied from the view of processes directed from the organisation to the newcomer on the basis that all organisations require a certain degree of order and consistency (Pascale 1985).

In seeking to achieve this, the implication is that organisations are conscious of the OS processes that they direct towards newcomers (evidenced, for example, by the content and delivery method of induction programmes) and, by extension, they are expecting

certain outcomes (Pascale 1985). Among the variables discussed in the OS literature as directed from the organisation to the newcomer are: the types of messages to newcomers which constitute efforts to engender first a sense of competence in the task role and second a sense of acceptance into the workgroup and organisation (Miller and Jablin 1991); the use of certain kinds of tactics rather than others (Jones 1986); the way the organisation transmits its systems of norms and values (Chatman 1989); the context and content domains presented as relevant to socialisation (Ostroff and Kozlowski 1992, 1993; Ashforth, Saks and Lee 1998); the role played by supervisors and co-workers during very early socialisation (Ostroff and Kozlowski 1992); the typology of information that newcomers must acquire upon entry to the organisation (Anakwe and Greenhaus 1999); the amount of personal support given at an informal level (Preston 1993).

Data from this study provides evidence that thinking of OS in this linear, unitary, and 'done to' way is not what is happening in reality. This is a notion hinted at by several previous researchers who have variously made calls for research on: moderating variables that might consider what newcomers desire and expect during their socialisation (Saks and Ashforth 1997); socialisation from the newcomers' perspective (Preston 1993); socialisation interventions (Holton 1996); the learning process that occurs during socialisation (Ostroff and Kozlowski 1993); and the extent to which supervisors and mentors engage in socialisation activities (Ostroff and Kozlowski 1993). These various calls for research provide further evidence that the breadth of the topic (OS) has led to a fragmented body of empirical work (Wanous and Colella 1989) and what is needed is deeper qualitative work on the array of contingency factors and the potentially complex and nonlinear interactions among them that determine organisational socialisation (Becker and Gerhart 1996).

This study's design took a deeper qualitative approach and looked at the array of contingency factors, including all those listed above. The result of this enabled the data analysis to provide strong evidence, (lacking from previous research) that OS processes



are mediated by both a range of organisational stakeholders and by the newcomer himself in a way that is both complex and non-linear. Further this study has found that different process variables come into play at different times in the OS process, provoking a continuing and continuous range of interactions. The top horizontal axis of the model (Figure 3) illustrates the activity the SLJs were engaging in at each one of the two time points.

## **OS is continuous**

It is interesting that more than thirty years ago Schein (1969:2) noted that the process of OS 'is so ubiquitous and we go through it so often during our total career, that it is all too easy to overlook it.' And indeed it does seem to be the case that OS theorists have overlooked its continuous nature.

Reichers (1987:279), for example, pointed out that 'the rate at which newcomers adjust and are socialised is an important and largely overlooked outcome variable in the socialisation literature.' And ten years later another researcher noted that 'theorists and practitioners have tended to view the OS process as occurring in the same manner (stages and rates) no matter what the particular socialisation content, be it technical or social information' (Dose 1997:14).

This research revealed that OS does not proceed in the same manner (either stage or rate) for individuals. The data analysis shows OS to be continuous. It is evident that from individual qualitative data that OS does not proceed at a linear rate in a predictive way. The qualitative data indicates that informants are concerned with various aspects of the socialisation process at different time points depending on their interactions and the role context.

By including in the research design an analysis of job mover experiences it further substantiates the finding that OS is an ongoing process in the organisational life of an individual. This evidence serves to confirm Schein's (1968:10) view that for any individual there are 'constant resocialisation pressures'. Thus it is somewhat surprising to see in the literature that this is a view that appears to have remained unexamined by subsequent researchers.

There are two points of similarity in the findings of this study and previous studies on the continuous nature of OS. This study has found that both SLJs and job movers were doing different things in time point two than they were doing in time point one. Additionally what they were learning in time point one is different from what they were learning in time point two. (Figure 3 illustrates this). These findings bear out the comments of Ostroff and Kozlowski (1992:850) that 'over time, different contextual features or different sources of information may become more or less salient as individuals adapt to their new organisational environment.' These findings also endorse Schein's (1993:86) statement that 'learning is not a unitary concept; there are at least three different kinds of learning that require different time horizons and that may apply to different stages of an individual's OS'.

Although stage models study OS from a perspective of various stages individuals pass through towards socialisation (discussed in Chapter Three and summarised in Table 5) they are problematic in a number of ways. This study endorses the utility of theorising OS as being continuous rather than proceeding through specific stages at a predictable rate.

Summarising so far: this study has revealed that there is a strong relationship between investiture and performance (see Chapter Seven). It has also revealed that it is not possible to determine the extent of the relationship between investiture and performance at a whole tactic level. But by considering the tactic in relation to four sub-questions it is



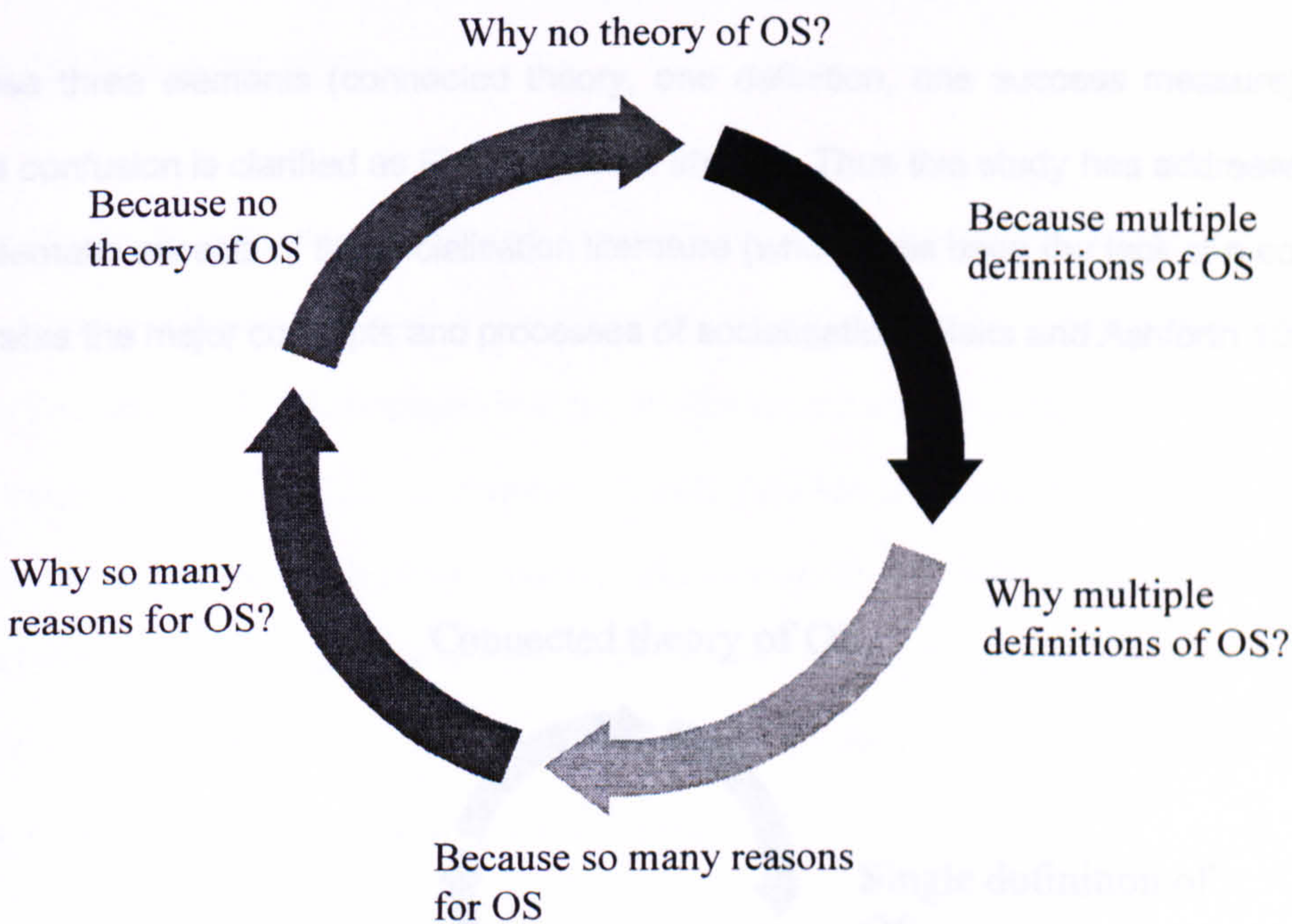
evident from the data that the extent of the relationship between investiture and performance is complex, contingent and continuous.

These findings thus call into question the relevance and potency of previous researchers in the field and in doing so make a unique contribution to the theory. With the findings OS can be re-conceptualised. The following section discusses this.

Re-conceptualising OS

Chapter Three discussed and illustrated (Figure 1) the cycle of theoretical confusion in OS. For ease of reading this cycle is re-produced below.

FIGURE 5: THE CYCLE OF THEORETICAL CONFUSION IN OS



As discussed, the model (figure 3) coherently integrates each of the previous theoretical OS models (content, stage, process and tactic) into one model which is simultaneously interactive and proactive. In doing so, this study's model becomes a vehicle for a 'connected' theory of OS – one in which, as found in this study, each of the elements interacts each with the other.



In taking work performance (as measured by BA's performance management system) as the primary measure of effective OS this study has argued that effective work performance is only possible if the individual is demonstrating success and capability in both fitting in and getting on. This approach conforms to Anakwe and Greenhaus's (1999:2) definition of effective socialisation, 'conceptualised as the primary outcome of the socialisation process that will enhance the achievement of individual and organisational outcomes'.

The model as a diagnostic tool

With a connected theory and a single measure of effective performance a clear definition of OS follows:

**OS is an interactive, complex, contingent, and continuous process during which an individual in role transition demonstrates success and capability in both fitting in and getting on in the emergent context.**

Given these three elements (connected theory, one definition, one success measure) the cycle of theoretical confusion is clarified as Figure 4 below shows. Thus this study has addressed 'one of the most problematic aspects of the socialisation literature (which) has been the lack of a coherent theory that integrates the major concepts and processes of socialisation' (Saks and Ashforth 1997:238).

in Chapter Ten. It is anticipated that this model would work in conjunction with the model given as Table 4) at the end of this chapter. Using both items – the model and the action plan – programme developers first determine where in the time-space the intervention is. The intervention then identifies which stakeholder groups are involved in the process. The model then provides the labelled model to generate a response for each of the new stakeholder groups. The appropriate action interventions. The model is then used to generate a response for each of the new stakeholder groups.

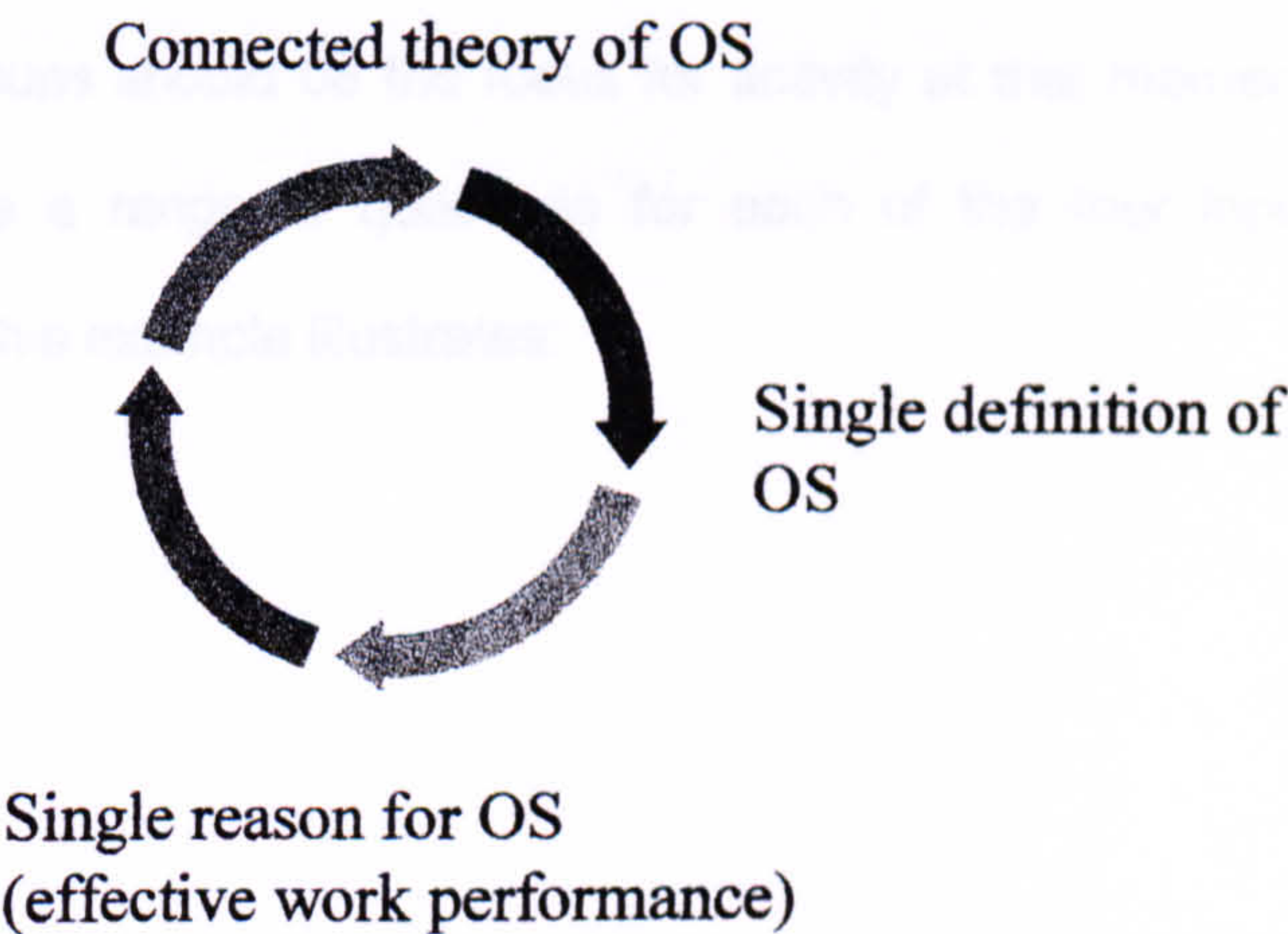


FIGURE 6: CLARIFICATION OF THE CYCLE OF THEORETICAL CONFUSION



This re-conceptualisation has the potential to profoundly affect the direction of future research and theoretical thinking in the OS field. And a new direction is one, which the literature review indicated is much needed. Additionally the connected theory proposed and modelled provides a strategic action guide for organisations (Louis, 1980). This takes the form of a diagnostic tool leading to a socialisation programme most likely to facilitate proactivity (Saks and Ashforth, 1997).

## **The model as a diagnostic tool**

‘Organisational socialisation literature has been criticised for producing descriptive theories relevant only to specific socialisation settings. Instead predictive models are needed that can provide strategic action guides.’ (Louis 1980:234). In presenting the model it was anticipated that it would form a ‘strategic action guide’ for BA, and possibly for other organisations. If it could be applied in this way, it could pave the way for future research on ‘the nature of needed interventions’, which is very limited in the field of OS (Holton 1996:247).

The model (figure 3) is the third practical tool arising from this academic research that could be used by individual programme developers. (The checklist and the training of insiders have been discussed in Chapter Twelve). It is anticipated that the model would work in conjunction with the action grid shown as Table 41 at the end of this chapter. Using both items – the model and the action grid - the programme developer first determines where in the time-scale the newcomer is. The developer then identifies which stakeholder groups should be the focus for activity at that moment, and finally uses the labelled model to generate a range of questions for each of the four inputs relative to the appropriate action statement. This example illustrates:

Within the first six weeks one of the actions of the newcomer's boss (in this case the programme developer) is to 'Create forums for helping the newcomer become visible.' He/she can do this by referring to the map and asking questions, relative to each of the four major elements or their supporting labels. Questions could be - what internal networks should the newcomer be in touch with? How can he/she best establish links with them? How could he/she learn about the airline industry in a way that promotes visibility? Who of his peer group could introduce him to social activities that generate visibility? To whom and in what way does he/she need to be visible? What skills does he/she need to develop to become visible in this organisation?

The point of the diagnosis is to ensure a rapid response and appropriate intervention. The labelled model provides an overview of all the aspects of OS revealed by this study which need to be covered in the first few months of joining an organisation.

By acting on the answers to these questions, and initiating conversations with the newcomer and others, the newcomer's boss is actively supporting the socialisation of the newcomer.

It may be, however, that conversations reveal that, in some areas, the newcomer does not need support, or that different questions need to be asked. If the latter case, the grid and the model can be used together to generate further and different questions.

Within the BA sample, for example, it was found that those who joined with a specific skill needed at corporate level were visible by virtue of their expertise. What they said they needed was:

More help in understanding the dispersed decision making of BA. Working out the logistics of managing to do this can be tiring and time consuming.



Table 44 lists actions for each of the stakeholders at various time periods. The time periods are conjectural, based on experience. The studies reviewed make it clear that the issue of time in relation to OS has not been addressed in a satisfactory way. However, data from the present study does support the stage model theory which states that OS is time related, and also (from the mover data) ongoing.

It is predicted that this form of diagnosis, followed by the appropriate action, would substantially reduce the costs of joining. If diagnosis and action were undertaken in conjunction with the checklist of organisational activities this prediction would be even stronger.

This method of developing 'in response' induction programmes could be tested on job movers who experienced much less OS activity than the majority of the newcomers studied. This may be one reason why their performance was relatively less successful.

It is also predicted that if job movers were given the support suggested to help newcomers towards optimum fitting in and getting on, their performance would be relatively more successful (i.e. more movers would get exceed performance ratings).



Time frame (approximate only)	SLJ needs to:	SLJ's boss needs to:	SLJ's peer group needs to:	SLJ's staff need to:	The organisation needs to:
Applying for the job	Understand what job is being 'sold'.	Sell the right job.	Understand why and how the job is being sold and be involved in the recruitment process.	Understand why and how the job is being sold and be involved in the recruitment process.	Sell the job appropriately through the selection and recruitment processes.
Offer made and accepted	Get to know the role/org set up pre start date	Involve the SLJ from point of letter of employment.	Support the boss's decision to appoint.	Support the boss's decision to appoint.	Get the admin right from the start.
First six weeks	Make an appropriate first impression. Show he/she has the right attributes.	Create forums for helping the new joiner become visible. Pave the way. Set clear objectives.	Involve the SLJ in what's going on. Give the SLJ social support.	Work with and for the SLJ.	Provide a mentor who can act as sounding board and provide reflective time.
Week 6 – 12	Consolidate the view that this is going to work. Be willing to change and adapt.	Give feedback on a regular and ongoing basis.	Explain the nuances - who's in, who's out, why things are the way they are, the opportunities for change and making an impact.	Manage the SLJ (upwards) effectively. Demonstrate appropriate 'followership'. Give upward feedback.	Devise an individualised induction programme - both formal and informal to enable work roles to be understood and industry knowledge to be gained.
Week 12 ish	Prove ability to deliver the 'test' successfully.	Coach in the way to approach the 'test'	Support the SLJ in delivering the 'test'.	Support the SLJ in the 'test' process.	Ensure the context to enable a fair 'test'.
Beyond week 12	Continue to learn what's needed, read the situation, etc.	Maintain performance feedback/support	Accept the newcomer as 'one of us'.	Deliver good work in a motivated way.	Enable ongoing career development and learning opportunities

TABLE 44: ACTIONS THAT THE DATA INDICATE WOULD HELP INCREASE THE LIKELIHOOD OF SLJS FITTING IN AND GETTING ON



## **CHAPTER FIFTEEN: CONCLUSIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

This final section concludes the study, considers the generalisability of the findings, and proposes some directions for further research.

### **A synopsis of the research journey**

This study started with a live organisational problem that presented in British Airways. The company was concerned about the financial, personal and organisational costs incurred in getting externally hired senior managers to fit in and get on.

A number of factors thought to contribute to the problem were identified and, following investigation, it was felt that a closer examination in the field of organisational socialisation, and specifically the investiture/divestiture tactic, would yield information that would help solve the problem.

Research began to find the answers to the question 'What is the extent of the relationship between investiture and performance' and to the four sub questions: what and how are newcomers learning in order to get to grips with the new organisation? What is the relationship between fitting in/getting on and time? Which experienced organisational members are most influential in the OS process? What part does the newcomer play in his OS?

Along the way it was found that there were a number of problems with the OS field: there were multiple definitions of OS; there was no unifying theory; there were a variety of different OS models. There was also little agreement on the purpose of OS or on what effective OS would look like. This fragmented field was, further plagued by

methodological issues associated with the research. Specifically mentioned were issues to do with research design, sample characteristics, data problems and generalisability.

Given the challenging arena, this research was designed to fill the gaps identified by previous researchers and to provide practical support to individuals in organisations. The design attributes aimed to maximise the possibility that findings would be valid and reliable. The research included a quantitative element (using a slightly modified version of an instrument used in previous research). It also included qualitative elements: self-report and manager report at two time points, comparison of the main sample group of senior manager newcomers with a matched sample of senior manager job movers, and organisational document analysis.

The design was rooted in the interactionist perspective in a way that would or would not validate eight expectations (Chapter Five). The data analysis validated all eight.

### **Revisiting the outcomes related to the research questions**

The research produced two key outcomes. The first was confirmation that there is a relationship between the investiture tactic and performance, and that this relationship is complex, contingent on a range of factors, and continuous. This outcome led to a 'connected' theory of OS which clarifies the cycle of theoretical confusion and extends theoretical thinking in the OS field.

The second outcome was the development of an 'in response' OS diagnostic for devising individualised OS programmes. This outcome is a practical organisational development tool of value to commercial organisations.

In addition to these two key outcomes were a number of others, which when combined with the connected theory of OS and the notion of 'in response' programmes direct future



research into 'new ways of thinking' about 'further research in the field' (Leedy 1997:46).

These are discussed below.

## **What newcomers learn**

In relation to the question 'what and how are newcomers learning in order to get to grips with the new organisation', it was found that they were learning in all the dimensions identified in Ostroff and Kozlowski's (1992) study: job-related tasks, work roles, group processes, organisational attributes (including culture and climate). In addition SLJs were learning industry knowledge (in this case knowledge of the airline. Surprisingly industry knowledge has not previously been identified as an aspect of a new role that it is essential for a newcomer to learn. For the group sampled it was a key topic for learning in both time points.

A similar and related omission from published research was learning about an organisation's wider context and environment, particularly given current concerns about corporate social responsibility, sustainable development, environmental issues, and corporate governance.

## **How newcomers learn**

It had been noted in previous research that very little was known about how newcomers learn (Bauer et al 1998). This study found that learners were learning in five identifiable ways from feedback and guidance, by comparing with previous experience, by observation and reflection, by trial and error and by investigation and asking questions.

This finding has important implications for researchers, as it points the way towards extending theories in the fields of learning and knowledge management. It also has important implications for organisational developers, as they seek to structure learning experiences and events for newcomers.

## **Support for stage models of OS**

In relation to the question 'what is the relationship between fitting in/getting on and time?' this study concluded from study of the mover group that OS appears to be an ongoing process, but with greater or lesser evident activity, depending on the scale of the transition. Thus there was some observed support for the stage models of OS.

OS as a continuing and ongoing part of organisational life is a field of research that evidently requires closer attention. Wider recognition amongst organisational members that all job transitions require socialisation would enable newcomers to roles to fit in and get on swiftly.

## **Who is influential in the OS process?**

In relation to the question 'which experienced organisational members are most influential in the OS process?', this study confirmed the findings of previous studies that the most influential, in priority order, are the newcomer's boss, his peers, his co-workers and staff and the organisation.

A group which was not mentioned in the literature reviewed, but which appeared crucial to this study's sample was the newcomer's superiors in the organisation (their bosses' bosses). Becoming visible to this group appeared to be a necessary precondition for optimum performance.



In the researcher's experience the skills and competences of managing upwards and gaining organisational visibility are neglected or ignored in assessment or development centres. Academic research that clarified or confirmed just how important these skills are, would be a valuable contribution to the selection and development of senior managers.

## **The part the newcomer plays in his OS**

The question 'what part does the newcomer play in his OS?' found the same six essential attributes that were discussed in the literature. These were an ability to develop ties to co-workers via the establishment of networks, coalitions, and friendships; the motivation of the newcomer to learn what is needed; personal competence in reading situations and getting them right; the possession of values that match the organisation or are adaptable to them; the ability of the newcomer to align with the organisation goals and plans; and the manner in which the individual learns.

This study found a seventh attribute that was not mentioned - the ability to make an impact on the organisation. This attribute appears to be linked to high visibility with senior level organisational members as discussed in the previous paragraph, but extends beyond that skill into the wider organisation. It seems reasonable to suppose that the ability to make a good impact on the organisation is an important element in fitting in and getting on. If further research suggested that it was a teachable/learnable attribute, it might contribute towards helping the SLJ reach effective performance.

## **Key outcomes of the design**

In discussing the complex, contingent and continuous nature of the relationship between investiture and performance, connections with the other models of OS discussed in the literature were made. It was proposed that this study's model was integrated model for OS which led to a unified theory of OS. Thus, the key outcome of the research design was a model which produced a 'connected theory' of OS.

An additional outcome resulted from examining the investiture/divestiture tactic at a more detailed level and more successfully than had previous research. In doing so, it provided evidence to suggest that this tactic and the tactics model may have outlived their current conceptual use and needed to be rethought.

## **Pointers towards future research**

The rich outcomes from this study all point towards future research, which would add to our knowledge base in OS theory. The most potent of these is further development of the connected theory put forward here, that OS is complex, contingent and continuous. This study has shown that it is difficult to clarify the extent of the relationship between investiture and performance. It may, therefore, be more fruitful for future research to consider the 'nature' of the OS/performance relationship as a more appropriate term.

This research found a link between time in new role and performance. Particularly useful in terms of organisational application would be further research on the relationship between investiture and commencement of added value performance.

This study considered a specific range of variables – future research could extend the range in order to test the connected theory put forward here. Factors such as corporate politics, the impact of recent corporate history and business success would all be of



interest, as would the influence of the specific reasons for a given individual's enticement into the organisation.

The sample of senior managers study here was different from the samples typically study in previous research. However, future research should look at further and more diverse sample groups.

Specific outcomes of this research, if considered for future research, could have particular value for commercial organisations such as BA. These are, further examination of the links between organisational visibility, upward management and making an organisational impact; a detailed assessment of the impact of treating job movers as if they were newcomers. (It is predicted, based on the findings of this study, that there would be a relative improvement in performance); and a more detailed evaluation of the various learning styles and methods in relation to fitting in and getting on as quickly as possible.

There was also a fourth pointer for future research, which did not emerge as a specific outcome of this research but was commented on by informants, and noted (by comparing the responses and performance of newcomers with job movers). This was the need for a more detailed investigation of a newcomer's ability to remain creatively individualistic over time in the face of organisational re-socialisation pressures which come with promotion, transfer, or day to day grind.

### **Is this research generalisable?**

There is evidence that this research, even within the limitations discussed, is generalisable. The clearest evidence for this is the fact that the quantitative data analysis of the relationship between investiture and performance reached exactly the same conclusions as the previous (Ashforth, Saks & Lee:1996) study. Thus, it is predicted that further studies using the same scale items and method of analysis would have very similar results.

The range of elements included in the design served to triangulate the findings successfully, confirming the proposition that the findings were reliable, and would translate to newcomers in other similar organisations. This proposition has already been tested to some extent by discussion, presentation and comparison with a range of organisations.

Common sense and intuition are not academic criteria of reliability and validity. Nevertheless they point clearly to the conclusion that paying sound and careful attention to newcomers is likely to result in better performance than neglecting them.

## **Summary**

This section has provided a synopsis of the research journey, has restated issues relating to the research questions and design, has pointed to areas for future research, and has considered whether the findings of this study are generalisable.

As four years of study draws to a close I can only hope that what I have learned in the process works for me in my new job and for all those senior manager newcomers I meet in the course of my future work. I have found the research process daunting, fascinating, tiring, and exhilarating. I have hit the wall far too often. Although I doubted it many times as I whittled down what I had to say and wanted to say, I have finally to accept that 'the willing reflective practitioner probably knows more than can be said' (Schon 1983, quoted in Pettigrew 1990:267).



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- Yin, R. K. (1994) *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications

Organisations approached about the research

Career change and outplacement organisations	Commercial organisations
Cedar International Change Partnership Coutts Consulting Group Drake Beam Morin Egon Zehnder International GKRS Hay Management Consultants Lee Hecht Harrison McKenna Breen Human Systems Odgers Executive Options Potentia International PriceWaterhouseCoopers Sanders and Sidney West Associates Whitehead Mann Willis Partnership Wilson Partnership	American Airlines Axa Investment Managers BBC BP Chemicals British Airports Authority British Telecom Cabinet Office Dell Computers Department of Trade and Industry Guardian Insurance Lloyds of London London Underground Prudential Royal Mail TFPL Unigate Dairies Yellow Pages
Research organisations	
Create IMD Institute of Employment Studies Pencorp Heritage	



## BA PERFORMANCE CATEGORIES

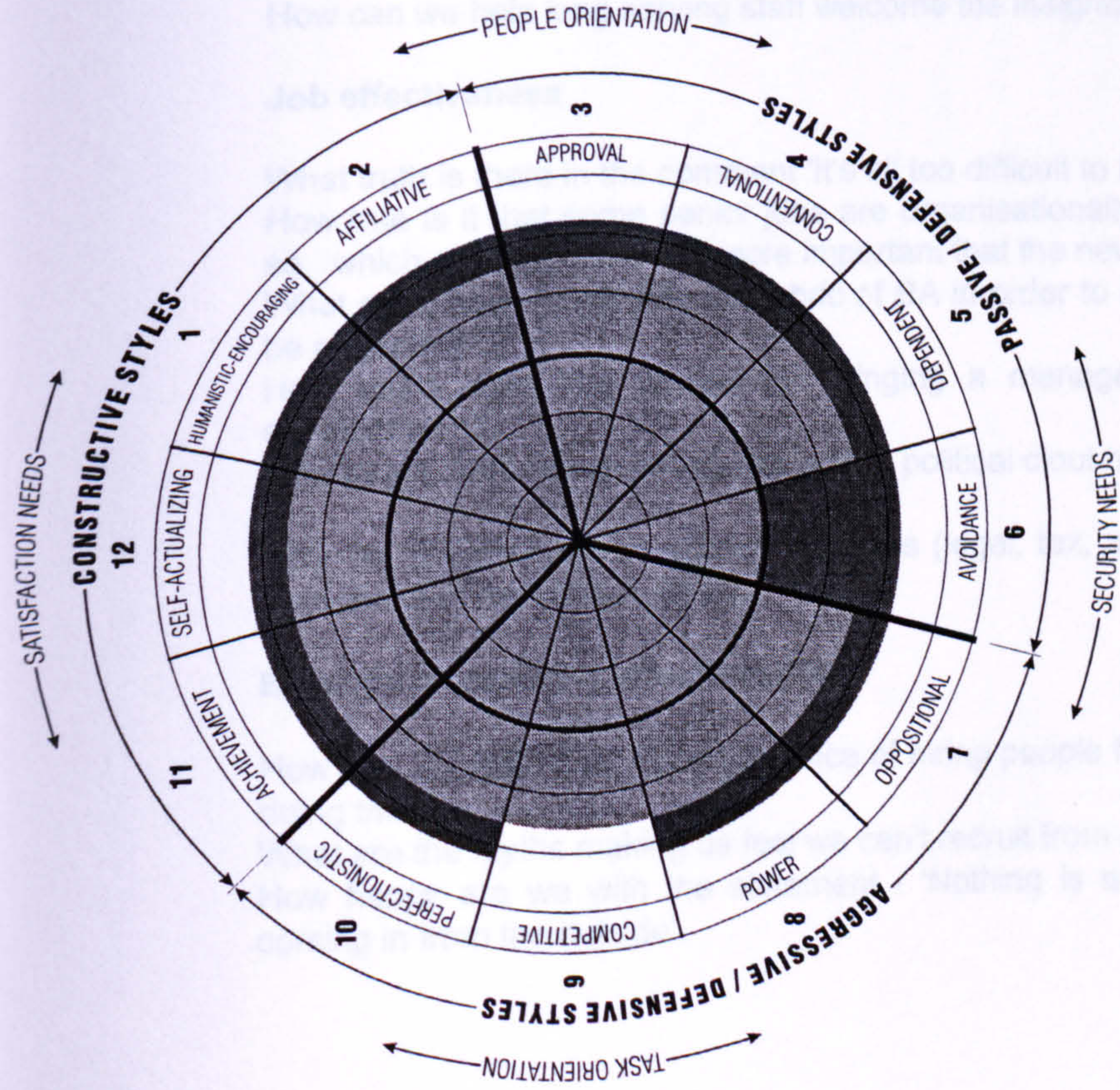
## APPENDIX 2

<b>Exceed</b> A clearly outstanding overall performance (normally only achievable if performance against both KPIs and Capabilities has been excellent)	
<b>Achieves:-</b> Exceptional KPI results in demanding circumstances All elements of the people KPI Capability objectives to an exceptionally high standard  <b>Exhibits:-</b> All the relevant positive capability behaviours Very few of the negative capability behaviours and none which are of particular importance in the job Exceptional determination for team and departmental results	<b>The people who at their level in the organisation have made the most contribution to the department's performance over the year:</b> Examples Include: Driving substantial continuous improvements in quality, costs and/or services. Improving the organisations effectiveness through driving cross functional working and teamwork. Demonstrated persistence and strong influencing in the face of strong resistance. Provided new insight into intractable problems and have implemented changes resulting in a breakthrough. Delivered exceptionally high productivity with high quality outputs all year. Worked outside the normal scope of the role/level for substantial part of the year. Developed new technical and capability management skills. Significant contribution to the direction of the department. Exceptionally good customer feedback. Recognised as a role model. Turning around a poor client/team/business situation perception/reality to a good one. Has moved forward significantly against own capability development plan.
<b>Well Met</b> A very good level of overall performance	
<b>Achieves:-</b> Very good KPI results in demanding circumstances All elements of the people KPI except where there is an acceptable reason and plan to achieve full compliance quickly Capability objectives to a very good standard  <b>Exhibits:-</b> Almost all of the relevant positive capability behaviours Very few of the negative capability behaviours Very strong determination for team and departmental results	<b>People in this category will have Displayed some or all of the following:-</b> Willingly undertakes opportunities that stretch them either within their role or cross functionally Look for opportunities that helps others (particularly cross functional work) Proactive use of new processes Copes well with ambiguity Proactively seeks solutions to problems. Has responded exceptionally well to feedback on capability areas and shown clear improvement Sound effective customer relations Efforts and achievements are readily Recognised beyond immediate team
<b>Met</b> A good level of overall performance	



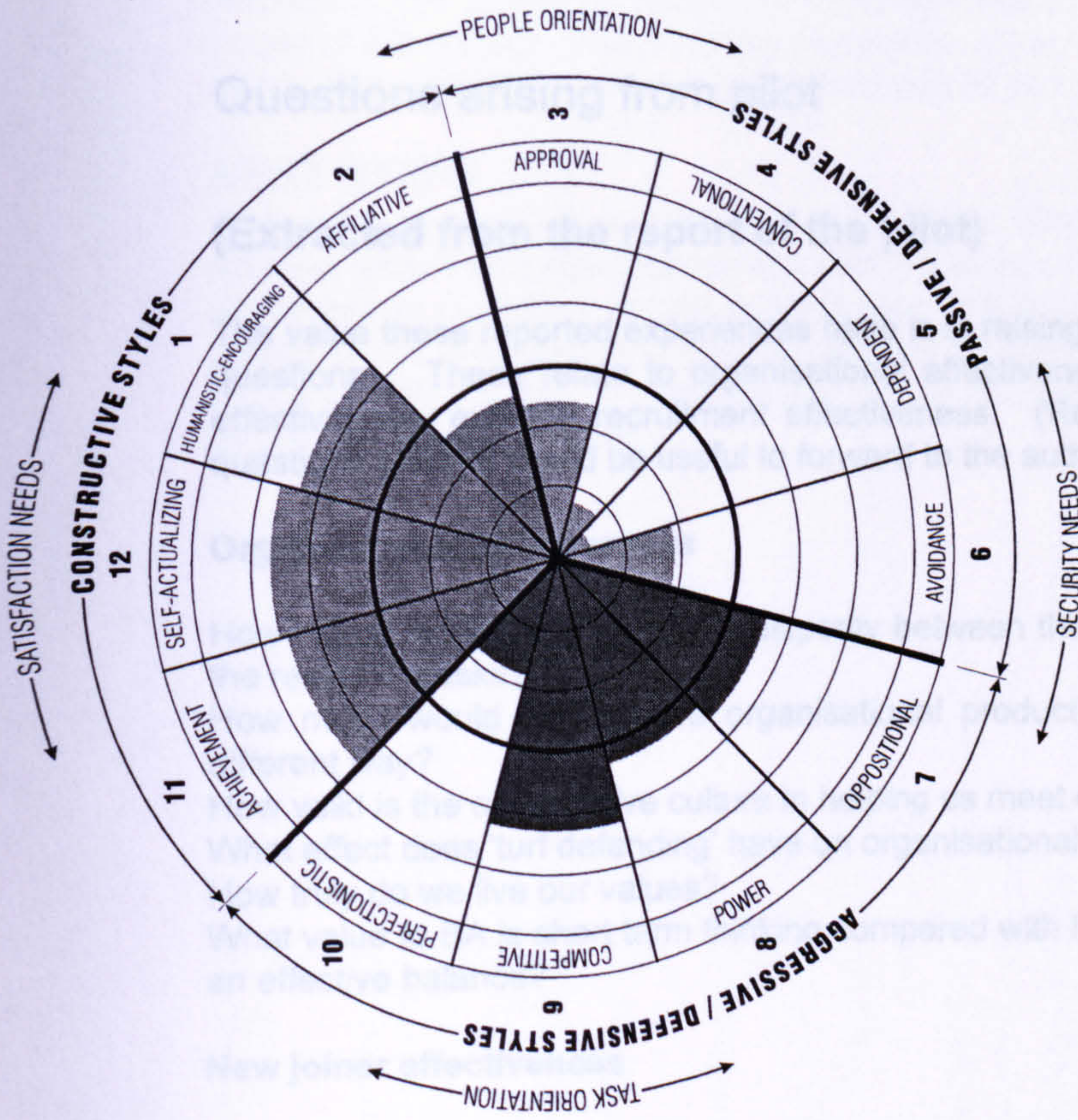
<p><b>Achieves:-</b>          Good levels of performance in relation to KPIs.          Acceptable performance against the elements of the people KPI but is less than fully compliant          Capability objectives to a good standard</p> <p><b>Exhibits:-</b>          The majority of the relevant positive capability behaviours          Few of the negative capability behaviours          Strong determination for team and departmental results</p>	<p><b>Met reflects performance that meets acceptable criteria in high performance organisations</b>          Examples Include:-          Can spot issues but need support in implementing solutions.          New to role but doing a good job.          Worked and delivered to the anticipated level.          Some improvement against capability plans demonstrated.          Performs in the job and delivered what is expected.          May need support in one or two areas.          Still on a learning curve. Not had the opportunity to demonstrate full performance yet - still developing</p>
<p><b>Not Met</b>          A clearly unacceptable level of overall performance (normally meaning that performance against KPIs or Capabilities has been unsatisfactory)</p>	
<p>Does not exhibit the achievements associated with the 'Met' category</p> <p>Does not mitigate against target shortfalls</p> <p><b>or</b></p> <p>Does not exhibit the behaviours associated with the met category</p>	<p><b>The people who at their level in the organisation have not delivered what was expected of them and as a result have reduced the effectiveness of the team they work in or lead. Examples include:-</b></p> <p>Missed several key deadlines (no plans or has KPI's and does not work to them).          Needed more supervision by manager than others at the same level.          Demonstrated significant skills gaps even after training, coaching and support (so work has to be done by others).          Behaviour contributed significantly to reduce team performance even after feedback.          'Jobsworth attitude' ie: will not work outside a narrow scope.          No positive evidence of responding to the feedback given on performance issues.          Cannot cope with normal volumes and unable to manage multiple task.          'Non-Starter' Not finding out what the task is and how to do it (only reactive).</p>





**BA Culture - Current (February 1999)  
Strategy**

### ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE MAPS



### APPENDIX 3



### **(Extracted from the report of the pilot)**

The value these reported experiences have is in raising a number of (as yet unanswered) questions. These relate to organisational effectiveness, new joiner effectiveness, job effectiveness, external recruitment effectiveness. (Readers are likely to identify other questions which it would be useful to forward to the author).

#### **Organisational effectiveness**

How happy are we that there is a disparity between the 'high gloss' marketing image and the reality it masks?

How much would we improve organisational productivity if we tackled meetings in a different way?

How valid is the consultative culture in helping us meet our business objectives?

What effect does 'turf defending' have on organisational productivity and effectiveness?

How truly do we live our values?

What value to BA is short term thinking compared with long-term thinking - how do we get an effective balance?

#### **New joiner effectiveness**

Why haven't new joiners left? What, if anything, have they compromised in staying?

Why have new joiners left?

How much value are we losing because new joiners are under subtle pressure to conform to the current culture and norms?

How happy are we with the statement 'My approach to work is a very good fit with BA. The downside to this is that radicals create radical thinking'.

How can we help long serving staff welcome the insights and experiences of new joiners?

#### **Job effectiveness**

What truth is there in the comment 'It's all too difficult to bring people into senior jobs.'?

How true is it that some senior jobs are organisationally more important than others? If so, which are these and is it more important that the new joiner is successful?

What roles have to get into the fabric of BA in order to be successful? What roles could be outsourced?

How much does the reason for bringing a manager in make a difference to job effectiveness?

How much does the recruiting manager's political clout have an effect on performance?

Why do niche players in support activities (legal, tax, audit) have a different experience from those in front line or change roles?

#### **External recruitment effectiveness**

How can we learn from our experience of hiring people from outside so we are not put off doing this?

What are the myths making us feel we can't recruit from outside?

How happy are we with the statement - 'Nothing is well tailored to a senior manager coming in from the outside'.



Answering the questions related to organisational effectiveness is outside the current scope of this project. However there would be some value in identifying those questions which, if answered, would have the highest payoff and getting to an answer on them.

## **NEXT STEPS**

Answering the questions related to new joiner effectiveness, job effectiveness, and external recruitment effectiveness is within the remit of the next stage of the survey. This is planned to continue over the coming year with a slightly different approach - all new joining senior managers and their bosses will be interviewed after six weeks in BA and after six months in role. A comparison group of internally transferred senior managers will be tracked in the same way.



## Questionnaire design

Amendments made to Ashforth and Saks (1996) questions for the pilot study and subsequently for the full study. These revised questions were used in the pilot study. Two questionnaires were used - one for the new joiner/mover and one for his boss. The first question shown in column two in each case is the joiner/mover question, the second question in each case is the boss question

**Hypothesis being tested:** The investiture tactic (questions 1 - 12) will be positively associated with performance (questions 13 - 20). High scores reflect the institutionalized end of the socialization continuum, and low scores reflect the individualized end. 'Questions should have an active, behavioural rather than an affective, evaluative tone in order to reduce common method variance'.

My no	Questions used in full study	Questions used in pilot study	Ashforth No	Ashforth questions
1	I have been made to feel that my skills and abilities are very important in BA He/she has been made to feel that his skills and abilities are very important in BA	I have been made to feel that my skills and abilities are very important in BA He/she has been made to feel that his skills and abilities are very important in BA	75	I have been made to feel that my skills and abilities are very important in this organisation
2	Almost all of my colleagues have been supportive of me Almost all of his colleagues have been supportive of him	Almost all of my colleagues have been supportive of me Almost all of his colleagues have been supportive of him	83	Almost all of my colleagues have been supportive of me personally
3	I have had to change my attitudes to be accepted in BA He/she has had to change his attitudes to be accepted in BA	I have had to change my attitudes and values to be accepted in BA The new joiner has had to change his attitudes and values to be accepted in BA	91	I have had to change my attitudes and values to be accepted in this organisation
4	My colleagues have gone out of their way to help me adjust to BA His colleagues have gone out of their way to help him adjust to BA	My colleagues have gone out of their way to help me adjust to BA His colleagues have gone out of their way to help him adjust to BA	99	My colleagues have gone out of their way to help me adjust to this organisation



5	Longer -serving BA staff have held me at a distance until they understand my ways of working  Longer serving BA staff have held him at a distance until they understand his ways of working	I feel that longer serving BA staff have held me at a distance until I conform to their expectations	107	I feel that experienced organisational members have held me at a distance until I conform to their expectations
6	BA does not try to change the values and beliefs of newcomers  BA does not try to change the values and beliefs of newcomers	BA does not try to change the values and beliefs of newcomers  BA does not try to change the values and beliefs of newcomers	79	The organisation does not try to change the values and beliefs of newcomers
7	I have learned that certain behaviours of mine are not considered acceptable in BA  He/she has learned that certain behaviours of his are not considered acceptable in BA	I have learned that certain behaviours and attitudes of mine are not considered acceptable in BA  Certain of his behaviours and attitudes are not considered acceptable in BA	95	I have learned that certain behaviours and attitudes of mine are not considered acceptable in this organisation
8	The following statement describes the attitude of BA towards newcomers: "We like you as you are: don't change".  The following statement describes the attitude of BA towards newcomers: "We like you as you are: don't change."	The following statement describes the attitude of BA towards newcomers: "We like you as you are: don't change".  The following statement describes the attitude of BA towards newcomers: "We like you as you are: don't change".	103	The following statement describes the attitude of my organisation toward newcomers: "We like you as you are: don't change".
9	In BA you must bide your time before you are fully accepted  In BA you must bide your time before you are fully accepted	In BA you must 'pay your dues' before you are fully accepted  In BA you must 'pay your dues' before you are fully accepted	111	In this organisation you must 'pay your dues' before you are fully accepted
10	I am still learning what's acceptable in BA  He/she is still learning what's acceptable in BA	I have been made to feel that I am still mastering the role  He/she is still mastering the role	112	I have been made to feel that I still have a lot to learn
11	I have been put through what could be called an initiation test  He/she has been put through what could be called an initiation test	I have been put through what could be called an initiation test  He/she has been put through what could be called an initiation test	87*	I have been put through what could be called an initiation test  * Was this question included in Blake's analysis of investiture/divestiture - see his fax, p3

12	Working in BA has met my expectations Working in BA has met his expectations	No equivalent		No equivalent
<p><b>Note -</b> My questions 1 - 5 formed Jones' (1986) 5 item scale on investiture My question 6 - 11 are Ashforth and Saks' (1996) new measures (Ashforth and Saks omitted my question 11 (their question 87) following their pilot study.</p>				
<p><b>Work performance</b> These questions were significantly changed after the first pilot participants were: Unable to rank against the word 'average' which formed the original 9 point scale Unable to give rich qualitative data without a lot of prompting Unhappy with having to change style of reflection and response halfway through the questionnaire Questions were adjusted to match the wording and same 7-point ranking scale as in part 1.</p>				
13	I am satisfied with the quality of work I am able to deliver I am satisfied with the quality of work he/she is able to deliver	Quality of work	159	Quality of work
14	The amount of effort I am putting in is less than I expected The amount of effort he/she is putting in is less than I expected	Amount of effort	160	Amount of effort
15	I find the job more stretching/challenging than I expected He/she finds the job more stretching/challenging than I expected	Amount of stretch/challenge		No equivalent
16	My job tests my ability to work without guidance or supervision The job tests his ability to work without guidance or supervision	Ability to work without guidance or supervision	161	Ability to work without guidance or supervision



17	I have a lighter workload than that of longer serving staff He/she has a lighter workload than that of longer serving staff	Quantity of work	162	Quantity of work
18	I am not able to work as effectively as I would like with my colleagues He/she is not able to work as effectively as I would like with his colleagues	Ability to work effectively with others	163	Ability to work effectively with others
19	I am showing less initiative in doing the job than I expected He/she is showing less initiative in doing the job than I expected	Initiative required	164	Initiative
20	I have to deliver work at a faster pace than I am used to He/she has to deliver work at a faster pace than he/she is used to	Pace of work (required speed of delivery)		No equivalent
<b>Note -</b> Question 13 - 20 were used by Ashforth and Saks (1996) following Smith, B. J., (1982) An initial test of a theory of charismatic leadership based on the responses of subordinates. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Toronto.				

## Email and lay summary

### SENIOR MANAGERS JOINING BA - E:MAIL

As part of our ongoing work into how we bring new joiners into BA and help job transferees move into new roles I have asked Naomi Stanford to assess our methods for supporting senior managers during their first months of starting their new job and make appropriate recommendations for improvement.

The research will take place over thirteen months starting from 1 March 1999 and finishing on 30 April 2000. During this period all senior managers who join as external recruits together with a selected number of senior managers who move jobs internally will be asked to participate in the process. Their bosses will be asked to participate likewise.

Since you fall into the category we are interested in I would be very grateful if you would participate in this research. Below is information on it will work and attached is some background to the project. **Please note that all the information will be held in strict confidence.**

Naomi Stanford will contact you in the next few days to arrange a meeting.

Mervyn

\*\*\*\*\*

### HOW THE PROCESS WILL WORK

Each new joiner and job mover, together with his boss will be asked to participate at the point when the new job is confirmed.

Assuming their willingness, Naomi will contact the individuals (new job incumbent and boss) and arrange a one to one, face to face meeting with each to take place after eight weeks in post.

The meeting will take the form of a 45 minute structured interview. Both parties will be asked the same questions. (Note neither party will know what the other has said as all information will be held in strict confidence).

Six months later she will contact the same two individuals again and conduct a similar meeting.

If you have any queries about this please contact Naomi (ext 85363). Otherwise she will contact you in the next few days to arrange to meet.



## SENIOR MANAGER NEW JOINER/JOB TRANSFER RESEARCH

<b>What is the research about?</b>	<p>Finding out: whether BA accepts or challenges a new joiner's identity/personal characteristics whether new joiner's receive positive or negative social support from others Then assessing what effect these two aspects have on the job performance of the new joiner.</p>
<b>Why do this?</b>	<p>To identify ways of helping the new joiner settle in more quickly To reduce turnover among new joiners To cut recruitment costs To enable BA to learn from newcomers To enable BA to give search/selection firms a good grounding in our culture</p>
<b>Who will the research involve?</b>	<p>The research will take place over thirteen months starting from 1 March 1999 and finishing on 30 April 2000. During this period all senior managers who join as external recruits will be asked to participate in the process. Their bosses will be asked to participate likewise.</p> <p>A comparison group of selected senior managers who move jobs internally, together with their bosses, will also be asked to participate.</p>
<b>How will the research process work?</b>	<p>Each new joiner and job mover, together with his boss will be asked to participate at the point when the new job is confirmed.</p> <p>Assuming their willingness, Naomi will contact the individuals (new job incumbent and boss) and arrange a one to one, face to face meeting with each to take place after eight weeks in post.</p> <p>The meeting will take the form of a 45 minute structured interview. Both parties will be asked the same questions. (Note neither party will know what the other has said as all information will be held in strict confidence).</p> <p>Six months later Naomi will contact the same two individuals again and conduct a similar meeting.</p>

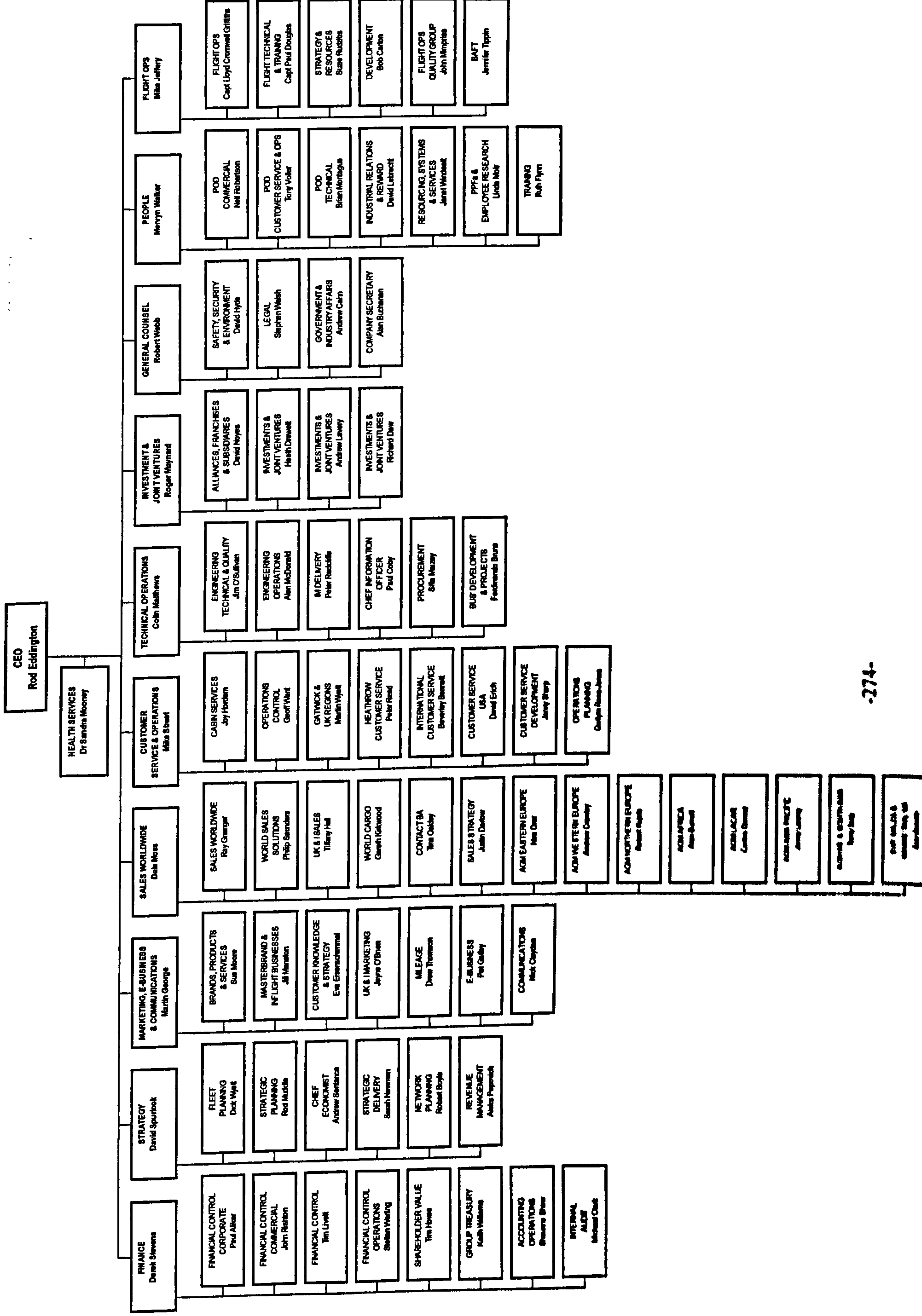
**ALL INFORMATION IS CONFIDENTIAL. NO NAMES/DEPARTMENT IDENTIFIERS WILL BE USED IN ANY WRITE-UP.**

BA Organisation chart (overleaf)



# BRITISH AIRWAYS MANAGEMENT TEAM

(as at 1st February 2001)



**JOINING BRITISH AIRWAYS - NEW JOINER/MOVER QUESTIONNAIRE**

We are interested in some particular aspects of the extent to which - and the techniques by which - British Airways is helping externally hired senior managers to "learn the ropes" and feel at home.

**1 Support for you in your role** - Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements using the response scale below

1 - Disagree strongly  
2 - Disagree moderately  
3 - Disagree slightly  
4 - Neither agree nor disagree

5 - Agree slightly  
6 - Agree moderately  
7 - Agree strongly

- ..... 1 I have been made to feel that my skills and abilities are very important in BA
- ..... 2 Almost all of my colleagues have been supportive of me
- ..... 3 I have had to change my attitudes to be accepted in BA
- ..... 4 My colleagues have gone out of their way to help me adjust to BA
- ..... 5 Longer serving BA staff have held me at a distance until they understand my ways of working
- ..... 6 BA does not try to change the values and beliefs of newcomers
- ..... 7 I have learned that certain behaviours of mine are not considered acceptable in BA
- ..... 8 The following statement describes the attitude of BA towards newcomers: "We like you as you are: don't change."
- ..... 9 In BA you must bide your time before you are fully accepted
- ..... 10 I am still learning what's acceptable in BA
- ..... 11 I have been put through what could be called an initiation test
- ..... 12 Working in BA has met my expectations

**2 Work Performance** - The purpose of this section is to determine how you rate your work performance. For each of the following areas of performance, please indicate the number that you think is an accurate rating using the response scale below.

1 - Disagree strongly  
2 - Disagree moderately  
3 - Disagree slightly  
4 - Neither agree nor disagree

5 - About average  
6 - Agree slightly  
7 - Agree strongly

- ..... 13 I am satisfied with the quality of work I am able to deliver
- ..... 14 The amount of effort I am putting in is less than I expected
- ..... 15 I find the job more stretching/challenging than I expected
- ..... 16 The job tests my ability to work without guidance or supervision
- ..... 17 I have a lighter workload than that of longer serving staff
- ..... 18 I am not able to work as effectively as I would like with my colleagues
- ..... 19 I am showing less initiative in doing the job than I expected
- ..... 20 I have to deliver work at a faster pace than I am used to



## JOINING BRITISH AIRWAYS - BOSS QUESTIONNAIRE

We are interested in some particular aspects of the extent to which - and the techniques by which - British Airways is helping externally hired senior managers to "learn the ropes" and feel at home.

**1 Support for the manager in his role** - Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements using the response scale below

1 - Disagree strongly  
2 - Disagree moderately  
3 - Disagree slightly  
4 - Neither agree nor disagree

5 - Agree slightly  
6 - Agree moderately  
7 - Agree strongly

- ..... 1 He/she has been made to feel that his skills and abilities are very important in BA
- ..... 2 Almost all of his colleagues have been supportive of him
- ..... 3 He/she has had to change his attitudes to be accepted in BA
- ..... 4 His colleagues have gone out of their way to help him adjust to BA
- ..... 5 Longer serving BA staff have held him at a distance until they understand his ways of working
- ..... 6 BA does not try to change the values and beliefs of newcomers
- ..... 7 He/she has learned that certain behaviours of his are not considered acceptable in BA
- ..... 8 The following statement describes the attitude of BA towards newcomers: "We like you as you are: don't change."
- ..... 9 In BA you must bide your time before you are fully accepted
- ..... 10 He/she is still learning what's acceptable in BA
- ..... 11 He/she has been put through what could be called an initiation test
- ..... 12 Working in BA has met his expectations

**2 Work Performance** - The purpose of this section is to determine how you rate the new joiner's work performance. For each of the following areas of performance, please indicate the number that you think is an accurate rating using the response scale below.

1 - Disagree strongly  
2 - Disagree moderately  
3 - Disagree slightly  
4 - Neither agree nor disagree

5 - About average  
6 - Agree slightly  
7 - Agree strongly

- ..... 13 I am satisfied with the quality of work he/she is able to deliver
- ..... 14 The amount of effort he/she is putting in is less than I expected
- ..... 15 He/she finds the job more stretching/challenging than I expected
- ..... 16 The job tests his ability to work without guidance or supervision
- ..... 17 He/she has a lighter workload than that of longer serving staff
- ..... 18 He/she is not able to work as effectively as I would like with his colleagues
- ..... 19 He/she is showing less initiative in doing the job than I expected
- ..... 20 He/she has to deliver work at a faster pace than he/she is used to

**JOINING BRITISH AIRWAYS - NEW JOINER/MOVER QUESTIONNAIRE**

We are interested in some particular aspects of the extent to which - and the techniques by which - British Airways is helping you to "learn the ropes" and feel at home.

**Support for you in your role** - Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements using the response scale below

1 - Disagree strongly	5 - Agree slightly
2 - Disagree moderately	6 - Agree moderately
3 - Disagree slightly	7 - Agree strongly
4 - Neither agree nor disagree	

**Variable**

Capability	1	I have been made to feel that my skills and abilities are very important in BA
Support	2	Almost all of my colleagues have been supportive of me
Attitude	3	I have had to change my attitudes to be accepted in BA
Adjustment	4	My colleagues have gone out of their way to help me adjust to BA
Inclusion	5	Longer serving BA staff have held me at a distance until they understand my ways of working
Values	6	BA does not try to change the values and beliefs of newcomers
Behaviour	7	I have learned that certain behaviours of mine are not considered acceptable in BA
Change	8	The following statement describes the attitude of BA towards newcomers: "We like you as you are: don't change."
Acceptance	9	In BA you must bide your time before you are fully accepted
Learning	10	I am still learning what's acceptable in BA
Initiation	11	I have been put through what could be called an initiation test
Expectation	12	Working in BA has met my expectations

**2 Work Performance** - The purpose of this section is to determine how you rate your own work performance. For each of the following areas of performance, please indicate the number that you think is an accurate rating using the response scale below.

1 - Disagree strongly	5 - Agree slightly
2 - Disagree moderately	6 - Agree moderately
3 - Disagree slightly	7 - Agree strongly
4 - Neither agree nor disagree	

Quality	13	I am satisfied with the quality of work I am able to deliver
Effort	14	The amount of effort I am putting in is less than I expected
Challenge	15	I find the job more stretching/challenging than I expected
Guidance	16	My job requires me to work without guidance or supervision
Workload	17	I have a lighter workload than that of longer serving staff
Effectiveness	18	I am not able to work as effectively as I would like with my colleagues
Initiative	19	I am showing less initiative in doing the job than I expected
Pace	20	I have to deliver work at a faster pace than I am used to



## GUIDANCE NOTES FOR BA'S PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT 2001

**Key Messages For 2001 Review**

We will continue with 4 performance ratings for the July 2001 review.

Absolute performance assessment of individuals' performance against KPIs and Capabilities will continue to be the first step in determining provisional performance ratings. However, departmental salary review committees will then undertake a "relative" performance assessment with two key aims :-

To ensure cross department consistent application of performance standards  
To ensure that the bonus budget is achieved.

There will be no BA-wide performance rating "forced" distribution. BA managers will be provided with a suggested performance rating distribution showing how budget can be achieved :

up to 5% not met; 35% met; 45% well met; 15% exceed

Note :- This distribution represents a suggested target for managers to bear in mind when assessing the performance of their teams. The above distribution actually slightly underspends the budget, and it is anticipated that managers will be able to apply a "plus or minus" approach to get to an appropriate distribution and remain within their budget. The reason for illustrating an underspend is that it is not a requirement that the budget is fully spent, and that it may, in practice, prove easier to slightly increase performance ratings of borderline cases than to reduce them.

Performance ratings must reflect both the "**What**" (KPIs) and the "**How**" (Capabilities).

This requirement reinforces the message from our CEO and Leadership Team that "Silo mentalities must go if BA is to be successful".

360 degree feedback must be obtained from a range of customers across relevant functions. Ask for feedback both on the "What was achieved?" and the "How it was achieved?".

It is intended that the salary review process will begin to shift to a greater emphasis onto effective base salary management. This will - over time - lead to greater differentiation in base salary levels based on a "medium term" assessment of each manager's performance and value to BA. (Use of the tool developed within Finance can assist managers in making this assessment of each individual's "value".)

Note :- Market median awards are based NOT solely on the current year's performance rating :

Bonus = current year's performance v KPIs and Capabilities;  
Base pay/Market Median adjustments = longer term value and performance assessment.

Alongside 5. above, the message will be reinforced that bonus reflects the last 12 months performance only. Last year's performance rating is not relevant in this year's performance assessment. High performance must be repeated each year, maintaining individual motivation. Base salary is the longer term measure of performance.